

FEATHERS

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TWENTY BELOW, BUT ALL WAS WELL Robin, Hermit Thrush, Flicker and Longspurs among the Thirty-three Species Recorded on Annual Christmas Count

Alice Holmes, Chairman, Christmas Count Committee

Schenectady, N. Y. (Mohawk River from Lock 8 to Mohawk View, Collins Lake, Woestina Sanctuary and lower Rotterdam Hills, Central Park, Vale and Parkwood Cemeteries, Union College Campus, Niskayuna, Lisha Kill, Meadowdale, Indian Ladder, Fuller and Oxford Road sections of Albany, and intervening territory) -- Dec. 20; 8:30 A.M. to 5 P.M., E.W.T. Clear; ground mostly covered with four inches of hard-packed snow; minimum of open water; no wind, to light west or northwest winds; temp. -22° at start, -20° at noon and at return in most sections, and with -5° the highest reading in any section. Twenty-three observers working in ten parties of two or more. Total hours afield, 40; total party miles, 143 (48 by foot, 95 incidental by car). American Merganser, 4; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Red-shouldered Hawk, 2; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Marsh Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 3; Ruffed Grouse, 7; Ring-necked Pheasant, 14; Herring Gull, 1; Great Horned Owl, 1; Flicker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 8; Downy Woodpecker, 54; Prairie Horned Lark, 12; Blue Jay, 125; Crow, 858; Black-capped Chickadee, 180; White-breasted Nuthatch, 32; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 3; Brown Creeper, 7; Robin, 1; Hermit Thrush, 1 (clearly identified by D.G., C.N.M., and N.V.V.); Golden-crowned Kinglet, 16; Cedar Waxwing, 1; Starling, 679; English Sparrow, 155; Pine Grosbeak, 1 (at close range by P.S.M.); Goldfinch, 33; Slate-colored Junco, 142; Tree Sparrow, 439; Song Sparrow, 13; Lapland Longspur, 20; Snow Bunting, 51 (mixed ground-feeding flocks of 50 Snow Buntings, 20 Longspurs, 100 Tree Sparrows, and 12 Larks first by R.S., and then also by G.B. and P.S.M.; Longspurs readily distinguished, but exact count impossible). Total, 33 species, 2868 individuals. -- Malcolm Andrews, Mr. and Mrs. George H. Bainbridge, Pauline Baker, Guy Bartlett, Dorothy Caldwell, Helen Cole, Edna Droms, Frank Freese, Sr., Frank Freese, Jr., Ealy Hallenbeck, Mrs. Hans Ruthsteiner, Mrs. Leonard Matimore, P. Schuyler Miller, Chester N. Moore, Stephanie Podrazik, Mrs. Merrill Rexford, Dr. Minnie B. Scotland, Margaret Smith, Rudolph Stone, Nelle Van Vorst, John Voght, and Alice Holmes, Christmas Count Chairman (Schenectady Bird Club).

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As usual, the report of the S B C Christmas Count was sent to Audubon Magazine, in the required form as on page one.

There was one common denominator for all the groups this year -- the sub-zero weather. According to the local newspapers there were no frozen ears, fingers, or toes - not even a frostbite. No mention was made, however, in the newspaper report of the consumption of coffee and cocoa by the observers which, it is said, was enormous as well as necessary.

Some of the observations you may find interesting by comparing the 1942 Christmas records with previous ones follow. This time, as was the case before, the crow led in quantity, while the starling moved back up from third to second place; and the tree sparrow, still numerous, moved down to third place.

Chickadees and Juncos Common

Another change was that the English sparrow stood in fifth place instead of fourth. There were more chickadees than English sparrows, and there were only seven fewer juncos than sparrows.

In the past 13 years only 11 species have appeared on every list: Pheasant, herring gull, downy woodpecker, blue jay, crow, chickadee, white-breasted nuthatch, starling, English sparrow, goldfinch, and tree sparrow. According to a statement in FEATHERS of December, 1939, it was thought that the herring gull would probably be the next to be dropped from the list. Because of the absence of open water, the prophecy almost came true in the latest census. Only one gull was reported.

No New Species

While there were no new species added to the list this year, three species seen had been among the missing in all of the Schenectady Christmas counts except once each previously.

A hermit thrush was recorded in 1937, and again this season in a different location. In 1934 there was a report of one Lapland longspur; this year on a wind-swept hillside in the Niskayuna area a flock of 20 was found. The flicker, new to the census list in 1941, was again seen this time in the Indian Ladder - Meadowdale region.

While the number of species was the same, 33, in 1941 and 1942, there were a thousand fewer individuals recorded in 1942.

1942, incidentally, set an all-time local record for minimum temperature on a Christmas count.

Territories and Observers

Those participating in the 1942 Christmas count included:

January, 1943

Party	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of species	33	18	18	2	25	12	8	6	10	6	9
No. individuals	2868	495	363	6	828	452	340	65	231	36	57
Amer. merganser	4				4						
Red-tailed hawk	2		1		1						
Red-should. hawk	2	1					1				
Rough-leg. hawk	1	1									
Marsh hawk	1	1									
Sparrow hawk	3				1	1	1				
Ruffed grouse	7		4		3						
Ring-neck pheasant	14	1			7			6			
Herring gull	1				1						
Great horned owl	1		1								
Flicker	1		1								
Hairy woodpecker	8	2	2		4						
Downy woodpecker	54	4	16		19	4	1		4	4	2
Prairie h. lark	12				12						
Blue jay	125	4	46		48	5			18	4	
Crow	858	300	22		28	350	75		82		1
Blk-cap chickadee	180	14	46	4	89	4		1	5	8	9
Wh.-br. nuthatch	32	4	8		10	3	1		2	4	
Red-br. nuthatch	3				3						
Brown creeper	7	1			6						
Robin	1	1									
Hermit thrush	1		1								
Golden-cr. kinglet	16	2	6		2				3		3
Cedar waxwing	1					1					
Starling	679	60	51	2	158	60	200	50	79		19
English sparrow	155	8	12		23	3	60	3	22	12	12
Pine grosbeak	1				1						
Goldfinch	33	4	2		16			2			9
Slate-colored junco	142	12	30		67	16	1	3	8	4	1
Tree sparrow	439	75	113		238	4			8		1
Song sparrow	13				12	1					
Lapland longspur	20				20						
Snow bunting	51		1		50						

Party 1 - Watervliet Reservoir; 7 hours; 8 miles on foot, 28 in car. Messrs. Bainbridge, Hallenbeck, Voght.

Party 2 - Indian Ladder and Meadowdale; 6½ hours; 3 miles on foot, 20 in car. Misses Caldwell and VanVorst, Mr. Moore.

Party 3 - Union College Campus and Vale Cemetery; 2½ hours; 5½ miles on foot. Misses Cole, Droms, Smith.

Party 4 - Niskayuna, Lock 7 to Mohawk View; 11 miles on foot, 20 in car. Messrs. Bartlett, Miller, Stone. 7 hours.

Party 5 - Campbell Road and surrounding territory; 3 hours; 4 miles on foot. Mr. Andrews.

Party 6 - Mohawk River road from Schermerhorn Road to Rotterdam Junction, including Woestina Sanctuary; 5 hours; 3 miles on foot, 22 in car. Messrs. Fresse, Sr. and Jr.

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Party 7 - Collins Lake; 1½ hours; 3 miles on foot. Mrs. Bainbridge.

Party 8 - Fuller and Oxford Roads, Albany; 3½ hours; 5 miles on foot, 5 in car. Miss Baker, Mrs. Mattimore, Dr. Scotland.

Party 9 - Feeding station at home, Morgan Avenue; Mrs. Rexford.

Party 10 - Central Park; 3½ hours; 5½ miles on foot. Misses Holmes and Podrazik, Mrs. Huthsteiner.

AFIELD WITH ARETAS A. SAUNDERS

Malcolm Andrews

Aretas A. Saunders, well-known naturalist and author of "A Guide to Bird Songs", has a lovely home in Fairfield, Conn. He has allowed his backyard to remain wild, so that the woods come almost right up to the house. During the spring and summer seasons the songs of many familiar birds are heard daily from a screened-in porch on the rear of the house. Many varieties of wild flowers along the front lawn bloom throughout the summer months, while various ferns display their greenery nearby.

An Early Start

It was shortly after 6 a.m. that July morning when we met in front of his home and started out on what was to prove a most enjoyable trip. Not a block away we found a brilliant scarlet tanager singing from atop a pin oak tree. Familiar calls and songs were all around us; the "chebec" of the least flycatcher, the "pee-a-wee" of the wood pewee, and the varied notes of a catbird, punctuated now and then by a few unmelodious cat-calls. A house wren gurgled from the top of a bush, while a flicker drummed on the resonant limb of a dead tree.

White-eyed

Turning down a road in an undeveloped residential section, we heard the sharp "chick-per-weo-chick" of the white-eyed vireo. Then crossing an open field, we had the songs of both the song and field sparrows simultaneously. Three mourning doves flew over, so close that the whistling produced by their rapid wing beats could be easily heard. Chimney swifts were continually twittering high overhead.

Along the edge of the woods we repeatedly heard "to-wee" and then less often the "drink-your-teeeee" of the red-eyed towhee. A meadowlark's slurring notes were heard in the distance along with numerous chipping sparrows' buzzy trills. The never-ceasing phrases of the red-eyed vireo came from deep in the woods.

Walking along an old wood road, the nasal "yank-yank" of



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effect. We passed a magnificent old tulip tree, almost 15 feet in circumference, according to Mr. Saunders, who said it is probably the only living remnant of virgin timber in that area.

Beecher and Wichity

Out of the woods and along another road, a yellow-billed cuckoo flew by and lit in a small tree so close by that we could see his yellow lower mandible quite well. Barn swallow adults and young were lined up on the telephone wires overhead, while a lone phoebe on a nearby pole was watching for passing tidbits. On a fence post perched a lovely bluebird, the brilliant sun truly reflecting "a little bit of sky" from his back. "I-wish-to-see-Miss-Beecher" was repeated loudly from the center of a large beech tree by a chestnut-sided warbler. The yellow-throat's "wichity-wichity-which" and the redwing's "conkiareee" were also heard.

We were fortunate in discovering a lovely cardinal flower growing along the edge of a brook near the road.

Well-named Woods

Soon we came to what Mr. Saunders calls the "Wood Duck Woods" for obvious reasons. A large marshy section along with the woody portion through the center of which flows a fair-sized creek, combine to give a variety of habitat that seems to suit both land and water species.

As we neared the wooded section, a small flock of goldfinches flew overhead, a crow cawed several times in the distance, and a blue jay gave his high-pitched alarm notes not far off. Along a wooded path, we spied a black and white warbler busily going over every nook and cranny of a big tree trunk in his search for insects. The peculiar separated phrases of a yellow-throated vireo were heard nearby. Along the bank of the creek, we had a glimpse of a young wood duck scurrying for cover along the opposite bank. We heard the alarm notes of the parent birds several times, but did not see them.

Northern Carolina

A big surprise for me came when the "wheedle-wheedle-wheedle" notes of a Carolina wren were heard, and then a pair of the birds seen quite well on the other side of the creek. Mr. Saunders said that this was probably the northern limit of the breeding range of this predominantly southern species.

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Turning back toward the marshy portion, we saw a Louisiana water-thrush and heard a snatch of its song. A green heron was seen cautiously picking its way along the trunk of a partially submerged fallen tree. We surprised several immature black-crowned night herons which flew across the swamp and lit in the branches of a dead tree. They remained motionless, while keeping a glassy eye fixed on our every movement. Just as we were leaving the area, we got a glimpse of the fiery orange-red of a male redstart up among the branches.

The Sanctuary

Deciding that there was still time to visit the bird sanctuary before lunch, we headed in its direction. This sanctuary is sponsored by the Connecticut Audubon Society. Due to its having been in existence for over ten years, it is now well grown over with nesting cover. A lovely pool is located in the center, while a fine museum, open daily to the public, is supervised by the warden, who lives on the sanctuary property. Grass paths run all through the area, and rustic seats are placed at appropriate points along these paths.

Arriving at the sanctuary, we heard the chickadee giving its name-call from a group of pines near the entrance. We scared up a dozen or so mourning doves feeding by a bird bath. Walking down to the pool, we sat down to watch and listen. Soon a female mallard with her brood of six ducklings came around the corner, feeding along the edge of the pool. We witnessed a tragedy when a snapping turtle grabbed one of the ducklings, and pulled it under water, where it disappeared from view and was not seen again. The frightened mother herded her remaining charges away, uttering notes of alarm. Mr. Saunders told me of witnessing similar occurrences before, and that high mortality was often the rule in large families of ducklings.

Ruby Nest

While continuing along the sanctuary paths, we were most fortunate in discovering a nest of the ruby-throated hummingbird. Two young birds were just able to fit into the exquisite inch-wide cup. We waited for quite a time, but the parent birds did not return. It was the first sanctuary nesting record for the hummer.

We then decided to call it a day, as the inner man was calling for satisfaction, and rare indeed is the bird student who fails to recognize that call.

1942 RECORDS

Did you keep a detailed list of your bird records during 1942? Or at least some notes of your more unusual records? The SBC record for 1942 is now being completed by Chairman B. D. Miller; help make the record complete by passing on to him a summary of your notes.

THEY BOTH HAVE WINGS

J. M. Hollister

One is impressed by the similarity in habits of the birds and insects.

The song of the mockingbird and wood thrush are supplemented by the cicada and the instrumental music of the locust and cricket.

The gulls and hawks are often called aviators; so are the dragonflies and the cicada-killer wasps.

The masonry work of the eaves swallow and the phoebe is no more skillfully done than that of the wasps and the caddice worm.

The scavenging work of buzzards and crows may possibly be far less than that done by the beetles. The work of both is of considerable importance to human beings.

The kingfisher and the heron are good fishermen. So are some of the diving beetles, although the size of the catch is quite different.

The artistic nest of the hummingbird requires no more skill than the home of the much detested case-bearing clothes moth, or the cocoon of the beautiful polyphemus.

So we might go on without end.

We like birds on account of their beauty and interesting habits, and they can be studied by daylight. But what would they do without insects? Many insects offer the same attractions, except that they are more active at night.

Why not work overtime and enjoy both?



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



LATE GRACKLES -- For a time it looked as though the annual Christmas count might include grackles this season for the first time. Some of them remained late at Guilderland Center, with from two to eight being more or less regularly recorded. The species was last seen on December 6 by Miss Van Vorst, however, and there were no indications of such birds there during the Christmas count.

And, speaking of birds that were missed on the Christmas count, there was the more-than-typical slip-up on screech

owls. A kingfisher had been seen several times during December along the open Mohawk beside the G. E., but was missing on the day of the Christmas count. And in Niskayuna there had been a sharp-shinned hawk which stayed out of sight that day.

ANOTHER CARDINAL -- Now that it's too late for others to see the bird, it develops that a male cardinal was to be seen regularly along the Rosendale Road in late May and June. It was observed repeatedly by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Woodin, most frequently in a lilac bush beside their garden.

Could this have been the same bird that in late winter and early spring was recorded frequently in the Schermerhorn Road section? By the time the cardinal was being seen along Rosendale Road, an air distance of about five miles, the one in the first section had disappeared.

GATEWAY HAWK -- Again this winter there was the usual question as to just what species of large hawk was in the vicinity of the Gateway Bridge. In previous winters, it will be recalled, the hawk was variously reported as a red-tailed or a rough-legged, with each observer certain about his own identification. Those cases worked out without difficulty, since on at least one day both species were simultaneously seen.

Now there is the usual large hawk there again. The bird there on Sunday, December 27, was a mature red-tailed hawk, it was determined by George Bainbridge and Esly Hallenbeck.

There was a smaller hawk there on December 31, Mr. Hallenbeck discovered. It was a sparrow hawk, a species more or less frequently found in that vicinity in any season.

HIGH WATER -- When 1942 went out, so did the ice on the river, following a 4.5-inch rainfall. The river at the city was high, but not particularly so. In the Crescent Lake section, however, an ice jam caused a record flood, even higher than the flood of seven years ago by a foot or more.

The effects on birds was interesting. While the water was high and quiet it froze. Then, with the water receding, the ice - about two inches thick - was left up in the air, except that it proceeded to drop and to bend over or break off the bushes or small trees to which it adhered.

With everything so ice-covered, most of the ground-feeding birds abandoned the area temporarily. Blue jays, chickadees and goldfinches continued their activities in the tree tops; but the tree sparrows, juncos and horned larks moved back to un-flooded fields.

The starlings were the exception. They seemed to find plenty of food on the ice. In fact, the freeze-up seemed to attract these birds. An examination of the ice showed that the surface was filled with seeds and parts of plants that had floated, and had been caught in the topmost ice. The starlings seemed to have easy pickings for their food that day.

Star-nosed moles, common shrews, shrew moles, voles, deer mice, rabbits, muskrats, and red squirrels were among the animals driven to high ground that day.

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BIRD RECORDS FOR EASTERN NEW YORK

Dayton Stoner, New York State Museum

In checking over my files relating to ornithological field observations which I have made in the Albany and other eastern New York areas during the past few months, several records appear to carry more than passing interest for one reason or another and to be worthy of special mention. A briefly annotated list of the species of birds concerned will serve to point out the seasonal, distributional or other value which these records provide.

American Egret

From my own accounts (Auk, 55, 119-121, 1938; Wilson Bulletin, 53, 41-42, 1941) and the reports of other observers published in FEATHERS, it seems apparent that the numbers of this fine heron have increased materially in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys during the past few years. That its numbers were well maintained in the 1942 post-breeding period is well borne out by the records obtained on two boat trips on the Hudson from Albany to Kingston Point and return.

On August 6, 1942, leaving Albany at 9.20 a.m. and arriving at Kingston at 1.20 p.m., Mrs. Stoner and I counted 49 egrets; on the return trip, 3.00 to 6.50 p.m., we counted 69 individuals. Most of the birds were on the east side of the river. The greatest concentration occurred in the vicinity of the mid-Hudson bridge where on a low-lying, grassy island a little more than a mile south of the city of Hudson, 51 egrets were counted along a linear distance of about one-half mile.

On September 2 we again made the trip on practically the same schedule as on August 6. Eighteen egrets were noted on the going trip, 93 on the return trip to Albany. Again, the greatest concentration occurred in the area north of Catskill where 40 individuals were counted over a linear distance of about one mile.

Buffle-head

Two females of this uncommon transient, west side Watervliet Reservoir April 17, 1940. Mr. E. W. Geiser of Troy reports that he saw a pair of these birds on the Hudson River between Waterford and Mechanicville, March 14, 1942.

Ring-necked Duck

A group of 13 males and 5 females, west arm of Watervliet

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Reservoir near causeway on Route No. 158, April 18, 1942. Seldom does one see locally so large a flock made up solely of this species.

Turkey Vulture

On the warm, sunny afternoon of April 22, 1942 I saw a single individual soaring in broad circles high over the fields at the south end of the Watervliet Reservoir. This is my first record for the Albany area within the period 1933 to date. On September 24, 1942 Mrs. Stoner and I observed eleven individuals soaring over an open area in Dutchess County five miles northwest of Millerton. This locality is about 45 miles southeast of Albany, approximately a mile from the New York-Connecticut state line.

Not only do these and other personal observations suggest an increase in abundance of the Turkey Vulture in eastern New York in recent years but also communications which I have received from Robert Terwilliger of Minnewaska and Daniel Smiley Jr., of Mohonk Lake provide data in substantiation of this belief.

American Golden Eagle

On July 28, 1941 I received a communication from State Game Protector G. R. La Plante of Plattsburg announcing the discovery of a freshly killed example of the Golden Eagle on Route No. 9N near Keeseville, Clinton County, New York. The bird obviously had been killed by a passing motor car and when first found on the morning of July 23, the body was still warm. Mr. La Plante suggests that since Cottontails are plentiful in that section of the state the unfortunate bird may have become the victim of the automobile as it pursued the Cottontail. This is my first notice of a Golden Eagle automobile highway casualty in New York State.

Southern Bald Eagle

Evidence of the increasing prevalence and local increase in abundance of this bird in the Albany area frequently comes to light. Although this eagle is not so often seen here in winter, Mr. Ernest Geiser of Troy reports one on the Hudson river between Troy and Mechanicville, February 9, 1942.

During the course of a day's trip in late summer in the Stuyvesant, Stockport and Hudson areas usually one or more Bald Eagles may be seen. On an all-day boat trip, Albany to Kingston Point and return, taken August 6, 1942, Mrs. Stoner and I saw on the going journey a single immature individual on the west side of the river near Castleton. On the return trip eight individuals two of which were adults, were noted; six of these, an adult and five immatures, occurred together on a small, grassy islet in the river about four miles south of Catskill.

Black-bellied Plover

Within recent years this plover has come to be more common than formerly in the Albany area, particularly in the drier autumn seasons when considerable expanses of sandy beach are left exposed at reservoirs, small lakes and the like. Apparently spring occurrences of the bird here are rare. My on-

ly such record for the period 1933 to date, is that of May 6, 1942 when I observed a single individual in typical breeding plumage on a mud flat near an icehouse at the south city limits of Albany. The plover was feeding quietly with several Spotted Sandpipers, Lesser Yellow-legs and Killdeers and I was able to view it with 8X glasses at a distance of about 40 yards. The contrasty black and white plumage of the plover rendered it conspicuous among the other shore birds feeding on the flat where it remained throughout the day.

Bonaparte's Gull

Seldom seen in this area before mid-April. Mr. Ernest Geiser of Troy informs me that he observed a single individual of this species near the State Farm at Troy on April 4, 1942.

Ring-billed Gull

This gull, too, appears to be increasing in abundance locally. It is likely to be seen in greatest numbers in late summer and early fall, at which time the individuals comprising the flocks which frequent the reservoirs, and the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, exhibit a considerable variation in coloration of plumage. A large proportion of such flocks is made up of birds of the year.

Near the north end of Tomhannock Reservoir on October 17, 1941 I witnessed the largest single aggregation of Ring-billed Gulls it has been my privilege to encounter in this area. A large "raft" of these birds which, through count and estimate, I conservatively placed at more than 2500 individuals in various plumages, occupied a closely circumscribed area on the water. Nearby was a similar floating assemblage of ducks - principally Black Ducks - but the two groups did not intermingle save a little at the margins of their respective flocks. The gulls slowly worked their way into a cove on the west side of the reservoir then, becoming frightened, arose en masse and with considerable vocalization alighted farther out on the water.

Red-headed Woodpecker

Seldom is this species reported from the Albany area. My most recent record is that of a pair about two miles southeast of Sprakers in Montgomery County, May 28, 1942. The two birds persistently remained on and about a large dead elm tree in an open field at the edge of a woodlot as though they might be nesting or preparing to nest there.

Tree Swallow

At the swamp along the railroad tracks three miles south of Guilderland Center, Mrs. Stoner saw three individuals, skimming and soaring over pools of open water on April 3, 1940. Four days later we saw three individuals near Feura Bush. On April 4, 1942 four individuals were soaring over the lagoon in Washington Park, Albany. Usually the earliest local spring movement of this swallow is not noted before April 5 - 7.

Rough-winged Swallow

This temperamental swallow appears to be increasing in numbers in eastern New York. I believe that in the field it

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is sometimes mistaken for the Bank or Tree Swallow and on that account its reported status is rather below the actual numbers.

On May 31, 1939 I captured an adult incubating female from a burrow in a small sand pit 10 miles west of Albany. This burrow was in a different sector of the pit from the six occupied by Bank Swallows. It was 36 inches deep and contained an unlined grass nest. This is only the third time in my experience that I have found the Rough-winged Swallow nesting in a burrow in a Bank Swallow colony. The Rough-wing was banded (139-35960), weighed (17.1 Grams) and its temperature taken (108.6°F.)

Despite my circumspect interruptions of her activities on alternate days, the Rough-wing continued to incubate through June 12 but two days later the nest had been abandoned.

On June 21, 1940 we discovered another Rough-wing's nest in a roadside clay bank 10 miles southwest of Albany. The burrow was only 15 inches deep and 24 inches below the turf; it contained six young age 5 to 6 days. Once again, our attempts to obtain sequential data on growth rate of the young was frustrated when the temperamental adults abandoned the nestlings on June 24 after we had obtained only two sets of readings on them. In my experience the Barn, Bank and Cliff swallows will seldom abandon their young under similar circumstances.

Oatbird

A single individual, west side Lake Champlain, a mile north of Wright, Washington County, N.Y., October 12, 1940. This is a fairly late seasonal record for this northerly territory.

Eastern Robin

On September 29, 1941, in the low-lying wooded areas a mile south of Stockport railroad station, hundreds of robins were flying about excitedly and calling vociferously. This was one of the best illustrations of pre-migratory flocking that it has been my privilege to see here. From that time on through October to mid-November, at Saratoga Lake, Watervliet Reservoir and other wooded sections on the flats near water, this flocking was more than usually evident. About November 12, the exodus began in earnest from these retreats which furnished protection from the weather and provided the last remnants of berries and other wild fruits which escaped the earlier frosts. My last bird at the Watervliet Reservoir was recorded November 26, 1941.

Eastern Bluebird

A male, female and four birds of the year at Stockport Creek near the railroad station, November 26, 1939. This is a late autumn date for this territory.

Solitary Vireo

Continued warm and pleasant weather in April, 1938 was responsible, in part at least, for the earlier than usual appearance of many migratory birds in the Albany area. Among these was the Solitary Vireo which I first recorded in Wash-

ington Park on April 19. This vireo usually appears about April 25.

Eastern Warbling Vireo

In spring seldom appears locally before May 1. My earliest record to date is for a single individual "warbling" persistently in tall willows near the Port of Albany, April 27, 1938. The following day two individuals appeared in Washington Park, Albany.

Black-poll Warbler

A single male observed in scrub woodlands a mile southwest of Karner, July 18, 1938. This date is too early for the southerly movement to have begun and too late for the regular northerly migration; this raises the question as to the possibility that the species may nest in the territory indicated. It is possible, however, that the individual sighted may have been a non-breeding straggler. The bird is said to be common in the higher Adirondacks in summer.

Myrtle Warbler

One male, singing intermittently, Washington Park, Albany, April 15, 1941. An early spring date for this territory where it usually appears about a week later in the season.

Cape May Warbler

Two males, Washington Park, Albany, May 2, 1942. Our earliest Park date and an early spring record for the Albany area.

Canada Warbler

One male, Washington Park, Albany, May 9, 1938. An early spring record for this area.

Scarlet Tanager

A single male vocalizing freely, Washington Park, Albany, May 4, 1942. This, too, is an early seasonal record for the species here. Another point worthy of mention is the undoubted increase in numbers and more general prevalence of this bird in the Albany area, particularly during the summer of 1941 and 1942. Whether this desirable condition is only temporary or more or less permanent remains to be seen.

Indigo Bunting

The widespread prevalence and abundance of this bird in the Albany area during the summer of 1942 is worthy of comment. Not, in the ten years of my bird observation here, has this bunting occurred in such numbers. From every shrubby thicket, fence row, wooded tract and roadside its loud, distinctive song gave notice of its presence.

Just what was accountable for the increased abundance of the bird in 1942 one can not know. Possibly the war situation may be directly or indirectly associated therewith. Obviously, with fewer persons tramping the woods and countryside and the ever-mounting acreage of reverted land, breeding conditions for this bunting have become more satisfying. The unwanted freedom from disturbance during the nesting period

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coupled with the increased vegetational growth of appropriate character may have been accountable for the more general prevalence and evident breeding success of the species in the area. It will be interesting to note whether this status is maintained in the immediately forthcoming seasons.

Slate-colored Junco

One male, Washington Park, Albany, May 18, 1938 provides a late spring record for this locality. That the species may breed in the nearby Helderbergs is suggested by Mrs. Stoner's sight record of a single individual in Thacher State Park on June 12, 1941.

White-throated Sparrow

On May 5, 1941, in Washington Park, Albany, occurred the greatest, concerted mass movement of this bird it has been my privilege to witness in a limited area anywhere. No doubt the then current warm, showery weather and mild southerly breezes prompted this local influx of White-throats. The birds were everywhere, on the ground, in brushes and trees, even well toward the tops of the tallest ones. The characteristic, sweet, plaintive notes were much in evidence and at times so prevalent and all-encircling as to bewilder the observer. On one bare area approximately 100 feet square at the base of a large elm I counted 50 White-throats. Using combined counts and estimates as a basis, I believe that at least 1000 birds of this species were in the Park at one time that morning. On May 6 the numbers there were less apparent and by May 9 the bird was obviously much less common.

AN UNUSUAL RED-WING NEST

An unusual red-wing nest is pictured in The Wilson Bulletin of December, 1942, and described by Dr. George Miksoh Sutton, Curator of Birds at Cornell University. Dr. Sutton was the speaker at the SBC meeting last June, and after the meeting visited the home of Malcolm Rix to inspect some of the models of extinct birds Mr. Rix has carved.

During the visit the conversation turned to the subject of nests; and Mr. Rix volunteered the information that he had a red-wing nest he had collected in 1900 - a nest resembling very much the pensile nest of the Baltimore or orchard oriole.

A search of the attic failed to reveal the nest, but Mr. Rix was able to find his photograph of it. He sent a photographic print to Dr. Sutton, together with a copy of the entry on the back of the print and some additional information in a letter, after which Dr. Sutton prepared the note for publication.

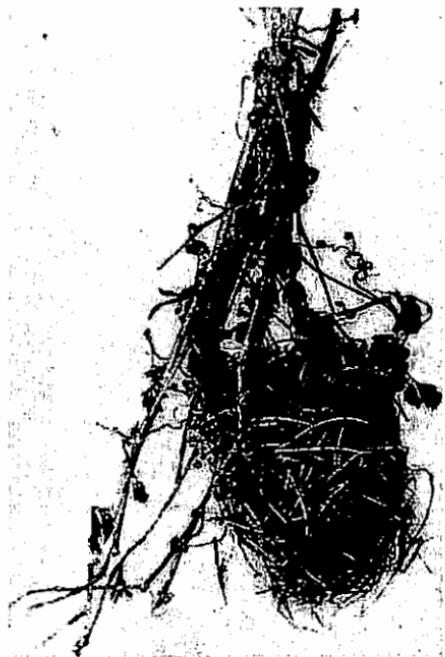
On the back of Mr. Rix's original print is written: "Red-winged Blackbird's nest. Oneida Creek, Oneida Lake, N.Y., May

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27, 1900. Nest overhung the water about three feet from the surface; suspended at the end of a branch of one of the small willows, covered with wild grape vine, fringing the creek where it ran through the open fields and pastures."

The inside depth of the nest was only slightly more than that of the general average of the species, and not comparable to that of the Baltimore oriole. The material used and the color of the nest itself were distinctly those of the red-wing, although the materials seemed somewhat finer than usual. In

the nest were four typical red-wing eggs.

With Mr. Rix at the time was Egbert Bagg, Jr., of Utica. Upon their return from the canoe trip, the nest was photographed at Utica by Egbert Bagg, Sr., an authority on the birds of that part of the state.

NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

WE'RE IN THE HEADLINES -- The Schenectady Gazette devoted a two-column heading to its report on the SBC Christmas Count results. Our fame spread beyond local boundaries, however, as indicated by this item carried by the Associated Press and appearing in numerous newspapers. A robin in winter is almost certain to gather a headline, even though there is hardly a winter when at least a few are not found here.

What, No Gremlins!

SCHENECTADY, Jan. 5 (AP). — On an all-day hike in 20 to 30 below zero temperature, the Schenectady Bird Club spotted 33 species of birds.
One was a robin.

1942 RECORDS -- If records at hand are to be believed, SBC members saw no black-billed cuckoos in 1942, and built up a total of only 174 species. The real answer, however, is rather that the records have not been turned in; several war-

lers, vireos, and even the siskin are missing from the list, as are the snowy owl, bufflehead, and shoveler. And, incidentally, it is also a fact that 1941 records lack reports on some of the species.

Among the 1942 species of more than passing interest were the red-headed woodpecker, turkey vulture, and Lapland longspur.

It is urged that all turn in their records. It's not necessary to have long lists or unusual dates. In fact, it is more important to have records of the dates when the migrant visitors became common -- when the normal flights were in evidence.

The Records Committee is now completing its report. Early receipt of unreported lists will be appreciated.

-- B. D. Miller, Records Chairman

POST-CHRISTMAS -- Probably nobody thought so anyhow, but it is very apparent that, despite all of the hours spent afield in so many sections on the day of the local Christmas Count, not all the species were found, or all the rare individuals located. During January, for instance, the records included another robin, regularly being seen in the lower Albany Street section; at least two kingfishers, along the Binne Kill; a winter wren, in the Campbell Road area; another flicker, or possibly two, in the Campbell Road and Rice Road sections; a flock of Canada geese, headed north over the city Monday noon, January 11; and a screech owl along the lower Lisha Kill.

OTHER CHRISTMAS COUNTS -- The Audubon Magazine with the summary of Christmas counts was yet to appear when this issue went to press, but records of some sections were already at hand locally.

Buffalo had 18,823 individuals of 52 species -- with the temperature up to 40 degrees. For the first time they had the killdeer, tufted titmouse, mockingbird, and myrtle warbler; and a scarcity of chickadees (22) and kinglets (5).

Rochester had 2575 individuals of 49 species, including the turkey vulture and swamp sparrow.

Hamilton, Ont., had 5354 individuals of 53 species. These three localities each had the loon, great blue heron, and cardinal, with 28 cardinals at Hamilton.

Toronto reported 13,302 individuals of 61 species in an expanded area (25-mile radius), including not only the loon and great blue heron, but also 57 cardinals, seven species of owls, the Carolina wren, red crossbills, and white-throated and swamp sparrows.

Buffalo completed 1942 with a total of 253 species for the year.

THE NEW YEAR -- The annual meeting of SBC comes this month. The dues for 1943 thereupon become payable to the treasurer. The new year promises no let-down in Club activities, although some of the more distant hikes and excursions may not be possible. And, incidentally, while renewing your own membership, aren't there others you know of who should be interested in joining the Club?

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A SEVENTEEN-YEAR RECORD OF THE BIRDS AT MOUNT MCGREGOR

Mount McGregor is only 30 miles to the north of Schenectady, but it is in Adirondack foothill country. For 17 years Miss Dorothy W. Caldwell, who has since moved to Boston, kept records of the birds of Mount McGregor, of Saratoga Lake, and of the many other sections, both close to and far from here, that she visited.

Before she left for Boston, Miss Caldwell summarized her local records for the S B C list. The following notes have been abstracted from her report and do not necessarily show all the species she recorded in Saratoga and Washington counties. Her local list included numerous records for Watervliet Reservoir, Niskayuna, and other Schenectady sections; and these have been omitted here. Except for cases that will be apparent, the dates shown represent her maximum dates. Some localities appearing regularly in the report have been abbreviated: McG, Mount McGregor; Bnta, Lake Bonita on Mount McGregor; SarL, Saratoga Lake; Huds, Hudson River north of Schuylerville; StfBr, Staffords Bridge; Wtn, Wilton. Miss Caldwell's list includes:

DIVING BIRDS

Common loon - Apr. 8, 1938, SarL, to May 5, 1942; Oct. 4, 1941 to Dec. 2, 1941.

Red-throated loon - Blown in by storm and picked up in Saratoga Feb. 13, 1934, along with a Holboell's grebe. The birds were displayed for a day at an automobile service station, when I had opportunity to observe them closely before the game warden released them.

Holboell's grebe - Huds, Apr. 13, 1940, by Miss Nelle Van Vorst, John Engle and me. Also see entry above.

Horned grebe - SarL, Apr. 8, 1938 to May 1, 1941; Oct. 19, 1940 to Dec. 2, 1941.

Pied-billed grebe - Huds, Mar. 31, 1939. SarL, Nov. 1, 1942. StfBr, Sept. 13, 1939 to Nov. 17, 1939 and Nov. 22, 1941. Made fewer trips than usual to Staffords Birdge in 1942

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and saw one or two grebes on almost every visit made; possibly nested there in 1942.

HERONS

Great blue heron - Apr. 5, 1940, StfBr, to Dec. 4, 1938, SarL. July and August dates in various years for Lake Bonita, Staffords Bridge, marshes near Victory Mills, and the Hudson River north of Schuylerville.

American egret - Three near Cambridge, July 18, 1937.

Green heron - May 2, 1939, Wtn, to Sept. 11, 1937, Wtn.

Black-crowned night heron - Aug. 18, 1941; several in little lagoon of Hudson River east of Gansevoort - the only time I have seen them so far north.

American bittern - Apparently nests near Staffords Bridge fairly regularly for I have May, June, July, Aug. and Sept. dates from 1939 to 1942.

Least bittern - July 19 and August 7, 1940, StfBr.

GEESE AND DUCKS

Canada goose - Mar. 23, 1940, StfBr, to Apr. 9, 1939, Saratoga Lake.

American brant - Flock at Saratoga Lake May 1, 1941 (FEATHERS, June-July, 1941, p. 56).

Mallard - Apr. 16, 1941, Huds, to Apr. 21, 1940, SarL; Oct. 25, 1940 to Oct. 28, 1941, SarL.

Black duck - Nests regularly at Staffords Bridge.

Baldpate - Apr. 13, 1940, Huds, to Apr. 16, 1942, StfBr.

Wood duck - Apr. 4, 1942, StfBr, to Oct. 26, 1941, Hudson River lagoon east of Gansevoort. Female with eight young near Geyser Park, Saratoga, in roadside pond July 12, 1942.

Redhead - Nov. 29, 1942, SarL.

Ring-necked duck - Numerous spring dates, Huds and SarL, Apr. 9, 1941 to Apr. 21, 1940; only one autumn date, Nov. 29, 1942.

Canvas-back - Nov. 29, 1942, SarL.

Lesser scaup duck - SarL, March 27 to May 4, 1940; Oct. 28, 1940 to Dec. 10, 1939.

American golden-eye - StfBr, Feb. 5, 1940 and Feb. 6, 1941 (There is usually open water all winter at Staffords Bridge). SarL, Mar. 22, 1942 to May 3, 1939; and Oct. 24,

1939 to Dec. 10, 1939.

Buffle-head - SarL, StfBr, and Huds; Apr. 2, 1941 to May 3, 1939, and Nov. 1, 1939.

Hooded merganser - Huds, Mar. 26, 1941 to Apr. 24, 1937; SarL, Oct. 15, 1938 to Dec. 3, 1939.

American merganser - Usually all winter at Staffords Bridge. Latest spring date, SarL, May 15, 1940; earliest autumn date, Oct. 24, 1939, SarL.

Red-breasted merganser - Occasional, SarL, Apr. 16, 1941 to May 3, 1939; Oct. 28, 1941.

HAWKS

Sharp-shinned hawk - Occasional at Mount McGregor; one winter record, Feb. 11, 1935, when there was an abundance of wintering goldfinches there.

Cooper's hawk - Occasional at McG; Apr. 9, 1940 to May 15, 1940, and Nov. 21, 1937 to Jan. 4, 1942.

Red-tailed hawk - Occasional at McG and SarL; Mar. 29, 1939; October 2, 1936 to Dec. 17, 1941.

Red-shouldered hawk - Frequent at McG, all seasons, but with late March and April dates most frequent.

Broad-winged hawk - Summer resident at McG; March 29, 1936 through Oct. 24, 1939.

Marsh hawk - Reported by John Engle from Grant Outlook Apr. 3, 1937, but not seen at McG by DWC; summer resident near StfBr, Mar. 24, 1935 to Nov. 1, 1939 and 1940; one in winter near Schuylerville, Dec. 28, 1941.

Osprey - Occasional in spring at McG, Apr. 13, 1938 to May 15, 1933; also recorded at Huds and SarL, Apr. 10, 1938 and Oct. 9, 1940.

GROUSE

Ruffed grouse - Resident at McG, although only occasionally seen. In winter of 1935-1936 a small group fed each day toward dusk in the tops of the poplars near the laboratory, from Jan. 25 to Feb. 22. On Sept. 16 a young bird was seen in the oak tree just outside my laboratory window.

RAILS AND GOOTS

Virginia rail - One was picked up in Wilton Apr. 11, 1929, apparently stunned; was later released.

Coot - Occasional at SarL; Oct. 19, 1940 to Nov. 1, 1942.

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SHORE BIRDS, GULLS AND TERNS

Killdeer - In valley and at SarL, Mar. 24, 1933 to Oct. 28, 1940.

Black-bellied plover - SarL, two Oct. 25, 1940, and two Nov. 9, 1941.

Woodcock - Summer resident at Wilton and near Ballston; earliest date March 16, 1929 at Wilton. Dead birds found there Mar. 23, 1938, and May 26, 1935.

Wilson's snipe - Huds, two Apr. 25, 1936 and two, in same spot, June 14, 1939.

Upland plover - Huds, two Apr. 24, 1937; one near Saratoga Springs May 9, 1942.

Spotted sandpiper - Probably summer resident at Lake Bonita on Mount McGregor, with first dates varying from Apr. 5, 1930 to May 24, 1933. Two summer dates, June 3, 1940 and Aug. 6, 1939. Mount McGregor trails often closed, sometimes for weeks at a time, because of the fire hazard through the early spring, so my Bonita records are sometimes meager.

Solitary sandpiper - One record for McG, May 8, 1942.

Greater yellow-legs - One record for McG, May 3, 1938; Huds, Apr. 25, 1939; SarL, Oct. 19, 1940 to Nov. 9, 1941.

Least sandpiper - Three at Dunham's Basin, Washington County, July 19, 1942.

Herring gull - Seen once at McG, in flight Mar. 28, 1937. At SarL through April and from October until the lake freezes in December.

Ring-billed gull - Huds and SarL, Mar. 18, 1942 to May 5, 1942, and Oct. 25, 1942 to Nov. 29, 1942. Also Huds, Jan. 1, 1942.

Bonaparte's gull - Flock of 20 to 30, SarL, Apr. 22, 1941; also Nov. 4 to 9, 1941.

Black tern - One at Staffords Bridge May 3, 1939; fine view of it, watched it closely for 20 minutes or so.

OWLS

Screech owl - Probably resident at McG; one found on laboratory window sill Feb. 8, 1934.

Barred owl - Resident at McG, seen and heard more often than screech owl.

GOATSUCKERS

Whip-poor-will - Summer resident at McG; earliest date May 1, 1936. Nest with eggs found May 30, 1929. Flock of 10 or 12, Moreau Pond, May 7, 1933.

Nighthawk - Rarely seen or heard at McG, probably transient visitor only. Heard at Lake Bonita May 24, 1933; one seen there May 22, 1935 and Aug. 9, 1938. Flock of five seen flying over Aug. 20, 1942.

SWIFTS AND HUMMINGBIRDS

Chimney swift - Summer resident at McG, Apr. 30, 1942 to Sept. 26, 1937.

Ruby-throated hummingbird - Summer resident at McG; May 6, 1938 to Oct. 1, 1939 and Oct. 8, 1935 (Mount McGregor has frosts later than does the valley, so we have flowers in the garden quite late.)

KINGFISHERS

Belted kingfisher - Summer resident at Lake Bonita, Apr. 13, 1938 to Nov. 3, 1942. SarL, Apr. 6, 1941 to Nov. 7, 1940 and Dec. 4, 1938.

WOODPECKERS

Flicker - Summer resident at McG, Apr. 3, 1934 to Sept. 3, 1942.

Pileated woodpecker - Resident at McG, only occasionally seen or heard, but with records for each month of some year; often fresh evidence of work on trees when bird was not seen; occasionally male and female seen together.

Red-headed woodpecker - Recorded at McG only once in 17 years, May 1, 1936. Seen at Schuylerville May 20, 1928 and at Wilton July 12, 1942.

Yellow-bellied sapsucker - At least frequently a summer resident at McG, Apr. 4, 1928 to Oct. 8, 1937. Dates through summer, or young birds seen, from 1928 to 1942 except in 1929 and 1935. Nest with young found June 17, 1934.

Hairy woodpecker - Resident at McG.

Downy woodpecker - Resident at McG.

(Miss Caldwell's records for the perching birds, mostly for the Mount McGregor area, will be continued in the April issue of FEATHERS.)



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



ANOTHER CARDINAL -- And now we have another record of a recent local cardinal. Mrs. Lorraine Ferguson, Dean Street, recorded one on several occasions in the vicinity of her home last summer. The bird is one with which she is familiar in the south. She identified it as a female.

ANOTHER FIRST ROBIN -- With that warm weather in late February came the first "first robin" story in the local papers. On February 24 H. R. McBride of 223 North Elm Street told of seeing one in front of his home. The cold weather that followed and lasted through early March dispelled all ideas, however, of an early spring. The robin in question was apparently one of the several that wintered locally, since there was no immediate follow-up of other redbreasts.

PILEATEDS -- Do you have any particularly interesting local records of the pileated woodpecker? If so, please turn them in to W. R. Steele, records chairman. In the April issue there will be a summary of this locally rare species.

NESTING EAGLE -- Four years ago some boys bicycled from Menands to Niskayuna, in search of an eagle nest about which they had just been informed. They questioned people in the vicinity where the nest was supposed to have been, but did not locate it.

Now it develops that bald eagles had nested in the vicinity, but the boys were a little late. Virginia Freligh has turned in a record of bald eagles nesting in the summer of 1904 between the Troy and River Roads at Stop 18. It's much more of a built-up section, today, however, and the only eagle records nowadays in that vicinity are for occasional birds wandering along the river.

In years past there were barn owls in that vicinity. Included in the misty records are accounts of a barn-owl nest in a barn near the Lisha Kill crossing of the Troy Road, and of monkey-faced owls not uncommonly seen (or shot) in the vicinity of Niskholm Island below Stop 23. In recent years a barn owl has been seen occasionally in that section, but no nest has been discovered. Miss Freligh has also turned in a record of a barn owl at Stop 18, Troy Road, on September 15, 1931.

Still another of her records is for a cardinal in the same section, on June 3, 1931.

CHRISTMAS STATISTICS -- Well, having examined the Audubon Magazine report on the nation-wide Christmas Bird Count, it is apparent that the Schenectady report was outstanding in one respect. Despite the fact that the counts were made in all sections of the country, none reported a lower mean temperature. Incidentally, while Schenectady saw fit to hike forth on December 20, most of the counts were made December

27, a much warmer day. Schenectady, it will be remembered, had -22° at start, -20° at return, with maximum of -5° in any section at any time.

Taking the count as a whole there were 250 counts. There were 1620 participants, and they tabulated 3,570,000 birds. What was the most common bird? You're wrong -- pintail ducks accounted for about half of the nation's total.

Charleston, S.C., had the largest list of species -- 125. A few other sections also turned in lists of more than 100 kinds. It remained for two observers at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge in California to turn in the big list -- more than 2,000,000 birds, including 1,750,000 pintails, not to mention 140,870 baldpates and 113,100 mallards.

Schenectady, with 23 observers, located 2868 individuals of 33 species, including the robin, hermit thrush, flicker, and Lapland longspur. To report the details of other censuses would be too space-consuming, but there are some high lights of other censuses in the general area which are of interest:

The New York City and Long Island regions, as always, had numerous species not to be expected up here. Buffalo had 52 species and 18,823 count, including numerous ducks and gulls, two tufted titmice, mockingbird, myrtle warbler, 10 cardinals, and a white-throated sparrow. Cortland had 32 species and 8430 count, with a glaucous gull, Iceland gull, and injured wood duck. Fort Plain had 23 species and 376 count. Geneva had 36 species and 3622 count, with one ring-necked and one ruddy duck among other duck species, and two coots. Kerhonkson had 17 species and 240 individuals.

Port Chester, along with such species as the tufted titmouse, myrtle warbler, hermit thrush, bluebird, and cardinal, also had the Acadian chickadee. Rochester had 49 species and 2575 count, including turkey vulture, black-backed gull, and swamp sparrow. Syracuse had 26 species and 609 count, with a yellow-bellied sapsucker. At Watertown 354 individuals of 11 species were counted.

Canada is usually thought of as "up north" but considerable portions are not north but west of us, and with generally milder climate. Hamilton, Ont., had 53 species and 5354 count, including numerous ducks and gulls, a black-crowned night heron, long-billed marsh wren, six robins, 28 cardinals. Toronto had a Carolina wren among its 20 species and 309 count.

In Vermont, Bennington had 13 species and 194 count; and Clarendon had 21 species and 252 count, including 11 white-winged crossbills, and with pileateds more common than hairy and downy woodpeckers.

Pittsfield, Mass., had 15 species and 173 count; West Becket had nine species and 42 count. Great Barrington reported 15 species and 247 count; Holyoke had 1146 count of 24 species. Lenox showed 14 species and 55 count. Sharon, with 23 species, had 21 mourning doves. Cape Cod had 65 species, including 436 myrtle warblers, among many interesting returns.

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Mrs. Anna Dickerman, Editor
1088 Dean Street, Schenectady, N. Y.

FEWER CROWS? -- Did it strike you that there have been fewer than usual crows in the past few weeks in high flight over the city in late afternoon, headed toward the Carman roosts? In most recent years the flight has been heavy. This year there were still plenty to be seen, but they could probably have been counted in the hundreds instead of the thousands. And the river was less of a feeding area for them, too.

TRULY WINTRY

Donald Buckley, President, Nott Terrace High School Bird Club

On Saturday morn, January 9, three cold figures at the corner of Balltown Road and Union Street swung their arms and stamped their feet in a futile attempt to keep warm. At about 9 o'clock they were met by another cold person, Miss Helen Cole, the leader. Together, after various greetings, they set off for Central Park.

The temperature had been officially stated (by one of the party) as 5 degrees below zero. On hearing this news we all snuggled closer to our various, and I might say several, layers of clothing. As we walked down Oregon Avenue we saw what to us were the two opposite ends of a rainbow. We were later told that such a phenomenon was referred to as "sun-dogs."

The air all about us was sparkling with snow particles which fluttered down the sunbeams but never seemed to reach the ground.

The cold had affected everyone in the small party, so we headed for the pavilion at Central Park Lake, in the hope that it might be open. We pounded and yelled discouragedly, but it was locked and barred. As everything seemed blackest, the staccato hammering of a woodpecker rang through the crisp, chilly air. After a brief hunt it was found to be a hairy woodpecker, high on a large maple, peck, peck, pecking away. Just as the excitement of having found a bird had died down, it brightened again to greater flame for lo, a brown creeper was seen. As he walked on the tree, he was outlined against the morning sun, and his decurved bill could be seen very plainly. His white wing bars also stood out against the dark bark of the tree.

When both birds had flown away the group split and headed for home, a place in which was a stove where some heat would be induced to enter our frozen bodies.

So -- with some chickadees along Balltown Road and a white-breasted nuthatch on the homeward journey -- ended the S B C trip of January 9, represented by three members of that club and one member of the Nott Terrace High School Bird Club.

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SCHENECTADY'S NESTING EAGLE

Virginia G. Freligh

(The following is based upon information supplied by Miss Freligh's father, Adam V. V. Freligh, Stop 18, Troy Road)

During the spring thaws of 1894 several unusually large birds swooped down on the unsuspecting village of Niskayuna. Never before had they been seen in that vicinity. Summer melted into fall; and then the snowflakes began to fly.

It was in the locust tree beside the Rosendale school house that one of the feathered strangers actually put in an appearance. The children had noticed a great moving shadow passing over the ground, and upon investigation they found a huge bird perching on one of the lower limbs of the locust tree. In its claws was a large fish, the tail of which still flipped momentarily. Their excitement was so great that the huge bird became frightened, dropped its prey, and thundered out of sight beyond the nearby wood.

During an early summer afternoon two years later an engineer from the New York Central Railroad was walking through a lane at the edge of a thick wood when a great flutter of wings overhead revealed a big brown bird with a white head leaving a large chestnut tree. I remember that old tree. It was a huge thing! The man was startled for a moment and then became curious for he realized the bird was a bald eagle.

He circled the tree several times and finally caught sight of some twigs dangling from a crotch forty feet in the air. He went down to the barn, found two ladders, spliced them together, placed them against the tree, and went up to investigate. In the meantime the great bird had returned to the nest. Instinct must have told the bird the nest was in danger, for it flew at the intruder and knocked him off the ladder. The man fell to the soft leaf and moss-covered ground below and, except for a long gash in his back, he was uninjured.

Undaunted, the man went to the farmer's house and told about his escapade, whereupon it was decided that all of them should go to the tree at dusk. It was arranged that the elder



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of the farmer's two sons would climb the ladder and the rest would stay below with shotguns aimed at the nest, just in case the bird should attempt another attack. And so "between the dark and the daylight, when the night is beginning to lower" the small excited group proceeded cautiously up the clay-packed hillside, and the gunners sought out vantage points while the youth started his climb. The watchers were alert, but no eagle flew out. The nest of sticks lay on top of the four limbs which formed the crotch. Near the center of the nest stood a baby eagle, wide-eyed and unafraid, and beside the little one was an unhatched egg. The lad took the egg from the nest, for it seemed obvious to him that it would never hatch, and surreptitiously descended the ladder. He showed his proud possession to his protectors and then the men retraced their steps, leaving the eagle family to their own watchful existence.

The young boy's mother became the proud possessor of the egg. In order to keep it, she pricked one end and drained out the contents. For many years to come, the egg shell was the source of much interest and speculation.

Hunter's Victim

Watch was kept off and on during the ensuing months. Occasionally the eagle was seen leaving his nest, or returning home with food for the offspring, but no one ever seemed to have seen two large birds about. Perhaps it was the mother bird that was shot by a hunter during the course of the summer. The victim's wingspread was six and a half feet.

The folks around never knew just when it was that the eaglet learned to fly. All they do know is that when the edges of the river began to freeze and when the snowflakes began to fly thicker and faster, the nest that had been under observation for nearly a year was empty.

Although it is known that eagles sometimes use the same nest for many years, no eagles ever returned to the crotch of that old chestnut tree forty feet in the air, one half mile south of the Mohawk and one mile west of the Village of Niskayuna.

REPORT ON THE PILEATED

As a supplement to the May issue of FEATHERS there will be distributed the first of a series of Schenectady Bird Club Bulletins. It will present local notes on the habits and distribution of the Pileated Woodpecker. The second bulletin is to present the story of the Purple Martin.

BIRDS AT MOUNT MC GREGOR

A 17-year record of the birds of Mount McGregor, Saratoga Lake, and the Hudson River north of Schuylerville, from the notes of Dorothy W. Caldwell, was published in part last month (page 17). The record is here continued for the perching birds. Except where indicated otherwise, the records are for Mount McGregor and its Lake Bonita. The records include:

FLYCATCHERS

Kingbird - Rare visitor, May 15, 1934 to June 3, 1935.

Crested flycatcher - Summer resident, May 8, 1936 to Aug. 8, 1938. Seen StfBr Aug. 27, 1941.

Phoebe - Summer resident, Mar. 22, 1938 to Oct. 7, 1942. Seen at Saratoga Lake Oct. 13, 1938.

Alder flycatcher - One record for McG, July 4, 1941. One at SarL May 1, 1941. Apparently nests at StfBr, heard frequently June 13, 1942 to Sept. 5, 1940.

Least flycatcher - Summer resident, Apr. 27, 1938 to Sept. 13, 1942.

Wood pewee - Summer resident, May 13 of three years to Sept. 18, 1939.

Olive-sided flycatcher - Rare visitor. Seen and heard by John Engle on July 14, 1935. Seen and heard June 8, 1937, for several hours at Artist Lake. Heard July 20, 1940 by me and seen by patient; seen by me July 23 and Aug. 8. Heard May 5, 1941 but could not locate the bird. Saw one bird June 2, 1941, and this bird heard by John Engle. Heard Sept. 2, 1942 by Mr. Engle.

SWALLOWS

Tree swallow - In valley at foot of McG, Mar. 29, 1938, and at StfBr on Mar. 29, 1942.



KEY TO MAP

1. Mount McGregor
2. Lake Bonita
3. Moreau Pond
4. Wilton
5. Glens Falls
6. Gansevoort
7. Hudson River
8. Schuylerville
9. Victory Mills
10. Fish Creek
11. Staffords Bridge
12. Saratoga Lake
13. Saratoga Springs
14. Ballston Spa
15. Troy
16. Albany
17. Schenectady

FEATHERS

Purple martin - Colony on Chauncey Olcott property first visited May 24, 1940. Summer resident there, April 17, 1941 to August 5, 1940.

JAYS AND CROWS

Blue jay - Resident.

Crow - First sign of spring at McG as a rule. First crows usually seen early in March: March 1, 1929, March 3, 1939, March 4, 1936, March 6, 1941 and 1942, but not until March 29, 1940. Seen all winter in 1938, Jan. 5 through February.

TITMICE

Black-capped chickadee - Resident.

NUTHATCHES

White-breasted nuthatch - Resident.

Red-breasted nuthatch - Status varies - frequently a transient visitor, often a winter resident, and occasionally a summer resident. Wintered 1930-1931, 1931-1932, Feb.-Apr., 1933, and 1933-1934. Wintered in 1937-1938, and probably nested at McG in 1938. Wintered in 1939-1940; and watched young bird fed Aug. 4, 1940 at Lake Anna. Wintered in 1940-1941. Probably nested near Lake Bonita in 1941; heard near lake June 16, two adults seen July 1, and heard July 4. Present Feb. 13 through May 8, 1942, and heard at Lake Anna on June 20.

CREEPERS

Brown creeper - Transient visitor, Feb. 13, 1935 to May 11, 1934, and Aug. 28, 1940 to Dec. 17, 1939. Winter resident in 1936-1937, 1937-1938, 1938-1939, and 1940-1941.

WRENS

House wren - No record at Mount McGregor.

Winter wren - Occasional transient; March 29, 1929 to May 17, 1937, and Sept. 22, 1936 to Oct. 15, 1926. Saw one once on Thanksgiving Day in my earlier years at McG, but those were the days when I recorded only my first dates for the calendar year.

Long-billed marsh wren - No records for McG. Nests in marsh at StfBr, May 15, 1940 to Oct. 9, 1940 and 1941.

Short-billed marsh wren - No records for McG. One record for StfBr, Oct. 9, 1941.

MOCKERS

Catbird - Summer resident, May 12, 1932 to Oct. 15, 1934

Brown thrasher - No McG record; occasional in valley.

THRUSHES

Robin - Summer resident, Mar. 10, 1930 to Nov. 9, 1936.

Wood thrush - Summer resident, May 3, 1933 to Aug. 18, 1940.

Hermit thrush - Summer resident, Apr. 9, 1934 to Oct. 24, 1939.

Olive-backed thrush - Summer resident, May 12, 1931 to Sept. 3, 1940.

Veery - Summer resident, May 8, 1930 to Sep. 20, 1940.

Bluebird - Transient visitor only, and then only occasionally. March 11, 1930 to Apr. 21, 1939; Aug. 15, 1934 to Nov. 2, 1934. One at Wilton Dec. 13, 1937.

KINGLETS

Golden-crowned kinglet - Transient visitor, and occasional winter resident. March 29, 1929 to May 5, 1933 and Sept. 24, 1940 to Dec. 25, 1932. Wintered 1934-1935; 1940-1941 (particularly abundant); 1941-1942.

Ruby-crowned kinglet - Transient visitor. Apr. 8, 1933 to May 18, 1940, and Sept. 7, 1934 to Oct. 28, 1936.

PIPITS

American pipit - No McG records. One at Moreau Pond May 6, 1934; flock of dozen at Bacon Hill Oct. 26, 1941.

WAXWINGS

Cedar waxwing - Summer resident, and occasional winter or transient visitor. May 21, 1931 to Oct. 8, 1942. Flock of 11 March 9, 1937; flock of 22 April 8, 1937. Flock of 50 April 4 to 17, 1938. Flock of 30 Nov. 1, 1937, flock of 100 on Nov. 5, of 40 on Nov. 8 and 12. Also flock of 10 in Saratoga on January 16, 1941.

SHRIKES

Northern shrike - Rare winter visitor. One Feb. 3 to 16, 1935. One Feb. 3, 1936. One Dec. 8, 1936, very near my laboratory feeding station. One Dec. 13, 1937. Four dates for Wilton - Feb. 19, 1938, Mar. 31, 1939, Apr. 4, 1939, and Feb. 17, 1941. One at Staffords Bridge Nov. 1, 1942.

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STARLINGS

Starling - Only one record for Mount McGregor; one bird January 20, 1938.

VIREOS

Yellow-throated vireo - Summer resident, May 4, 1942 to September 18, 1936.

Blue-headed vireo - Summer resident, April 5, 1928 to October 25, 1932.

Red-eyed vireo - Summer resident, May 6, 1937 and 1942 to September 28, 1940.

Warbling vireo - Occasional transient visitor, May 12, 1937 to May 27, 1941.

(Miss Caldwell's records for the birds of Mount McGregor will be completed in the May issue of FEATHERS. Species to be included comprise the warblers, weaver finches, black-birds and orioles, tanagers, and the grosbeaks, buntings, finches, and sparrows.)

WINTER ALONG THE SHORE

Nelle Van Vorst

Field trips along the Massachusetts shore are sponsored by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and the Brookline Bird Club. To have the opportunity to join the group on some of these trips certainly is a treat for any of us who do not have the chance to visit that area often. The winter birding there often reveals the visit of a rare northern bird such as the Kumlien gull, bald eagle, gyrfalcon, and nearly always some snowy owls.

The yacht clubs at Newburyport on the Merrimac Basin afford fine places to watch and study the thousands of ducks and gulls that congregate in open water through the winter. It was on February 21 Dorothy Caldwell and I joined the Massachusetts Audubon group for a trip to Newburyport. Approaching the shore of the Merrimac near the lower yacht club, a song sparrow greeted us with his full song on this spring-like day. Along this shore the use of binoculars is still permitted, although on all outer shores no binoculars or cameras are permitted.

Scanning the Basin, the Canada geese and the great black-backed gulls could easily be distinguished by their size. Ev-

ery one tried to identify a Barrow's golden-eye among the huge flocks of blacks, common and red-legged, the small buffleheads, the streamlined red-breasted mergansers, the greater scaup which frequent the salt water, the old-squaws as they flew low with their almost-swallowlike flight, and the American golden-eyes.

Frozen Marshes

The constant wheeling of the gulls and the rapid yet distinctive flight of ducks over the blue of the water and the white of the remaining snow certainly held us spellbound for some time. We were finally coaxed along by the thoughts of the possibilities of snowies, longspurs and buntings on the frozen salt marshes.

As we walked along the highway, which is through the salt marshes, we looked at every staddle, empty or filled with salt-marsh hay, for a snowy. By this time of the year a great many staddles were empty, as the salt hay is usually taken away while the marsh is frozen. It seemed as if the warmer weather had driven all the snowies north as we heard of no one who found an owl that day. We were fortunate in finding a flock of meadowlarks and one lone snow bunting. The calls of the northern horned larks and Lapland longspurs teased us as they flew across the road to hide in another salt marsh. As we were scanning an old, weathered stump for a snowy we saw three pintails appear along the edge of an icy pool to feed on the seed of sedges and grasses.

Later in the day we met some of the Brookline members and joined them at the upper yacht club to watch the Bonaparte gulls and to look for the gyrfalcon, which we did not find.

On February 22 we visited Rockport and Gloucester, on the outer shore. Although we did not have a waterfront pass, we had permission to go along some of the rocky shore without our glasses. Again we had almost perfect weather, so we could spend the entire day watching the ever-changing sea. While we were having our picnic lunch near Pigeon Cove we eagerly watched and hoped for a European cormorant. Soon a large, black bird flapped slowly along close to the water with outstretched neck and alighted on a marker where a gull had been resting. This was our cormorant.

Guillemots

While we were watching this cormorant, several more flew by, and a loon came into view. It was also at Pigeon Cove that we saw three black guillemots.

At Gloucester Harbor we again watched hundreds of gulls, hoping to find a white-winged gull which would have been a different species. We could not complain when we did not find one, for we had had such a wonderful two-day visit at the shore.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



PIGEON HAWKS -- Two pigeon hawks were found by the Club group on the Schermerhorn Road field trip on March 14. One was in a tree, so a careful study was made of the bird's markings and size. Later, when the two were flying over the fields, their flight was studied.

AFTER BIG GAME? -- Our G-E sparrow hawk objects to the ducks being here! On March 18 he was seen pursuing two male American mergansers toward the Mohawk. He was very soon alone as the ducks seemed too swift for him. -- Nelle Van Vorst

SPRING GEESE -- A flock of a dozen Canada geese were seen from a G-E office window March 19, flying very low toward the Mohawk (Nelle Van Vorst). On April 2 George Staffa saw 15 of the geese, flying north in typical V formation, over the city at the Gateway Bridge.

FRECKLED -- George Bainbridge reports this one: He sent his five-year-old granddaughter a postcard picturing the wood thrush. When she saw him later she thanked him for the picture of "the bird with the freckles."

LOCAL AUTHORS -- The Auk for January contains a note from Dr. Dayton Stoner of the State Museum at Albany on "Defensive behavior of the white-breasted nuthatch" as observed when a gray squirrel approached the birds' nest in Washington Park, Albany.

The March, 1943, issue of the Bulletin to the Schools -- the Arbor Day and Bird Day issue of the state publication -- has two articles written locally. Dr. Stoner has written on "Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tree Troubler," with Washington Park and other illustrations showing puncture bands. Guy Bartlett wrote on "A Century after Audubon," referring to winter ducks on the upper Hudson and to Audubon's local work.

VALE CEMETERY -- From the notes of Barrington S. Havens:

What may be the first record of the woodcock for Vale Cemetery was made April 1. The bird was flushed early in the morning from a small clump of evergreens, evidently having dropped in for the night or at daybreak after a nocturnal trip from the south.

The prairie horned lark is back again in the lot between Brandywine Avenue and the Cemetery. Larks nested there two years ago (FEATHERS, August, 1941). The birds were singing there in the morning in late March.

Although we nominally consider the meadowlark as a bird of the fields, its haunts and habits during migration are something else again. One was observed in the Vale Cemetery region the latter part of March, not in song but uttering its harsh, kingbird-like note.

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GREAT BLACK-BACKED

Guy Bartlett

Schenectady was visited by great black-backed gulls during March. For the county it was possibly the first record of these large gulls; but it is interesting to note that reports for Buffalo, Rochester, and other inland points are not uncommon (It is probable, however, that the birds fly along the St. Lawrence River to those points).

Presence of black-backed gulls was strongly suspected on March 17. The Mohawk River was on a rampage and the flats along the river at Niskayuna were under water. Just before dark a large flock of gulls flew in from the south and alighted on the shallow water of the flats. In the flock were at least 300 birds, and they were flying far higher than usual. Their screams could be heard before they could be seen.

As the gulls arrived over the flooded land and continued to soar and maneuver, all the time screaming, it was assumed that they were herring gulls. Crows in flight, at lower level, served roughly as an indication of size, hinting at this species. And then four larger gulls were noticed bunched together in the flock. The question arose as to the flock being mostly of ring-billed gulls, with a few of the larger herring gulls mixed in. The water remained high for a few days, and the gulls continued to feed in the flooded fields. Those birds under observation, and there were many, were all herring gulls. And then on March 21 a great black-backed gull -- somewhat larger and with darker back -- was identified, on an ice cake with two herring gulls.

Herring gulls visiting Schenectady are for the most part not in full breeding plumage. In the case of this flock, however, not more than a dozen of the birds were attired in juvenal plumage. At the height of the mid-March flight there were at least 800 herring gulls in the general area from Lock 7 down to Mohawk View, as well as a separate flock of about 60 ring-billed gulls in the vicinity of the islands.

Gulls were not alone as visitors to the flooded flats. Various flocks of different river ducks likewise fed and stayed there overnight.

BIRDS AT MOUNT MC GREGOR

Some of the bird records of Dorothy W. Caldwell, covering 17 years at Mount McGregor in Saratoga County were presented in the March and April issues of FEATHERS (pages 17 and 27). The following complete her records for there:

WARBLERS

Black and white warbler - Common summer resident, May 1, 1941 to Sept. 15, 1938.

Tennessee warbler - Rare migrant. Dead bird found in garden May 27, 1937.

Nashville warbler - Occasional migrant, and occasional summer resident. Nest found June 1, 1928. Summered also in 1936, 1937 and 1938. Earliest arrival date, May 5, 1941.

Parula warbler - Rare migrant. May 12, 1936, and Aug. 18, 1940 to Oct. 3, 1941 (several seen).

Yellow warbler - Never recorded at McG, although common in the valley.

Magnolia warbler - Not uncommon migrant; occasional summer resident. Migrant Apr. 30, 1930 to May 23, 1939, and Aug. 4, 1940 to Sept. 26, 1937. Seen at Lake Anna July 1, 1941 and July 8 and 9 and Aug. 5, 1942.

Cape May warbler - One record, May 8, 1935.

Black-throated blue warbler - Common summer resident, May 3, 1933 to Sept. 22, 1938.

Myrtle warbler - Spring migrant and occasional summer resident, and rare fall migrant. 1935 - from May 8 to Aug. 15. 1936 - From Apr. 29 to July 20. 1937 - Apr. 28 daily to July 28, and Aug. 23 to Sept. 27. 1938 - Flocks Apr. 14 to 18; daily from Apr. 27 to June 8; and daily at Grant Cottage feeding station from Aug. 4 to Sept. 8. 1939 - Apr. 27 daily through July, and Aug. 5. Apparently did not nest at Mount McGregor in 1940 or 1942. 1941 - May 3 daily through June. Fall migrants Oct. 14 to Nov. 2, 1938.

Black-throated green warbler - Common summer resident, Apr. 27, 1938 to Oct. 10, 1932 and 1941.

Blackburnian warbler - Common summer resident, Apr. 28, 1938 to Sept. 24, 1941.

Chestnut-sided warbler - Common summer resident, May 5, 1930 and 1942 to Sept. 1, 1940.

Bay-breasted warbler - Rare migrant, May 13, 1933 to May 22, 1938.

Black-poll warbler - Rare migrant, May 16, 1941 to May 31, 1935, and Oct. 7, 1942.

Pine warbler - Uncommon transient; occasional summer resident. Earliest arrival date, April 20, 1931. Daily at Grant Cottage feeding station Aug. 20 to Sept. 10, 1935. Latest date Aug. 24, 1936.

Yellow palm warbler - Rare migrant at McG, Apr. 14, 1938. Near SarL Oct. 4 to 11, 1941.

Western palm warbler - At Wilton, Sept. 22, 1939 to Oct. 11, 1941.

Oven-bird - Common summer resident, May 1, 1936 to Sept. 27, 1940.

Water-thrush - Failed to distinguish between the species until 1941. Apparently the northern nested at McG in 1941 and 1942.

Northern yellow-throat - Common summer resident, May 7, 1938 to Aug. 23, 1938. Dead young bird brought to laboratory Aug. 23, 1938.

Wilson's warbler - No record.

Canada warbler - Usually a summer resident, May 9, 1930 to Sept. 1, 1940.

Redstart - Common summer resident, May 5, 1930 to Aug. 28, 1936.

WEAVER FINCHES

English sparrow - Seen once, in May, 1934.

BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES

Red-wing - Summer resident at Lake Bonita. Earliest arrival date, March 13, 1942.

Baltimore oriole - Occasional migrant only. May 8, 1941 to May 31, 1934; and female or immature Aug. 17, 1942.

Bronzed grackle - Rare migrant. One April 2, 1934; small flock overhead Oct. 19, 1942. Flock at SarL Nov. 1, 1942.

Cowbird - Common summer resident, March 22, 1935 to July 25, 1942.



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SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB

Annual Membership: Active, \$2, Assoc., \$1

Mrs. Anna Dickerman, Editor
1088 Dean St., Schenectady, N.Y.

TANAGERS

Scarlet tanager - Common summer resident, May 5, 1942 to August 20, 1942

GROSBEAKS, BUNTINGS, FINCHES and SPARROWS

Rose-breasted grosbeak - Common summer resident, May 1, 1928 to August 27, 1938. Bird in juvenal plumage fell from nest August 27, 1938 and was brought to laboratory.

Indigo bunting - Common summer resident, May 12, 1938 to Aug. 18, 1940. Curiously mottled moult at StfBr Sept. 2, 1942.

Purple finch - Common summer resident, rare winter visitor. March 18, 1935 to November 8, 1942 as residents. Winter visitors Nov. 28, 1937 to Jan. 27, 1938; flock of dozen Jan. 11, 1940; and one Feb. 15, 1941.

Pine grosbeak - Occasional winter visitor. Nov. 11, 1930. March 17 and 18, 1933. Nov. 19 to Dec. 21, 1933. Dec. 23, 1936 to Mar. 20, 1937. Jan. 27 and 28, 1938. Dec. 5, 1939 to Apr. 5, 1940, flock of 20 seen frequently, and many also in valley. Feb. 7 to Mar. 28, 1941, 20 or more almost daily. Several occasionally from Jan. 6 to Apr. 6, 1942.

Common redpoll - Occasional winter or spring visitor. Mar. 12 to Apr. 7, 1930. From several to about fifty daily at laboratory window Jan. 25 to Mar. 18, 1936. Flock of 30 to 40 frequently seen from Dec. 17, 1937 to Mar. 11, 1938. Flock of 20 to 30 from Mar. 22 to Apr. 16, 1939, and large flocks in valley. Flock of 50 Jan. 5, 1941; several on Dec. 7, 1941.

Hoary redpoll - One on February 20, two Feb. 25, two Feb. 26, several Feb. 27, one Mar. 12, and one from Mar. 16 to 21, all in 1936. One or more seen close at hand on window sill almost daily, feeding with the large flocks of common redpolls. Once clearly recognized, the much lighter gray back and white or whitish rump made the birds quite outstanding.

Greater redpoll - One Feb. 27, several Feb. 29, one March 2 (drove downy woodpecker from window sill), and one March 3, all in 1936. Feeding with flock of common redpolls, and occasionally seen at close range on window sill, where large size and heavier bill, thicker at base, made the occasional individuals unmistakable.

Pine siskin - Occasional winter visitor. Large flocks Mar. 14 to 20, 1930 and Nov. 5, 1939 to Apr. 28, 1940. Several from Apr. 19 to May 8, 1941.

Goldfinch - Common summer resident; common most winters.

White-winged crossbill - Three on Feb. 27, 1935; seen plainly just outside laboratory window.

Red-eyed towhee - Summer resident at north end of Lake Bonita. Migrant dates Apr. 28, 1940 to May 18, 1937, and Sept. 14, 1942.

Savannah sparrow - Transient once, one on Apr. 19, 1939.

Slate-colored junco - Abundant in spring and autumn, occasional summer resident and winter visitor. Migration dates difficult to assign. Bird I banded on Aug. 2, 1924 fed daily at the laboratory window until Aug. 24. Adult and very brownish fully feathered birds seen June 30 and July 1, 1939.

Tree sparrow - Occasional transient; rare winter visitor. Earliest arrival date, December 5, 1941; latest spring date, April 19, 1933.

Chipping sparrow - Common summer resident, Apr. 8, 1936 to Oct. 29, 1939.

White-crowned sparrow - Rare transient. One recorded on each of May 25, 1928, May 14, 1931, May 11, 1933, May 9, 1936, and May 16 and 17, 1938; and on Oct. 15, 1935, and Oct. 8 and 10, 1938.

White-throated sparrow - Common spring transient, apparently less common in fall; no summer records, although it might be expected. Apr. 12, 1938 to May 30, 1927, and Aug. 13, 1936 to Oct. 12, 1936.

Fox sparrow - Occasional transient, March 29, 1939 to Apr. 28, 1940, and Oct. 12, 1938; flock in full song Apr. 2, 1938; at McG. To Nov. 11, 1940 at Wilton.

Song sparrow - Occasional summer resident, 1934, 1935, 1937, and 1938.

EGGS GALORE

J. M. Hollister

One of the high spots in my trip of this year to Florida has been my visit to the Charles E. Doe collection of birds and bird eggs at the P. K. Youge School of the University of Florida at Gainesville.

There are more than 60,000 eggs in the collection, representing 1255 species and subspecies of birds according to the A. O. U. list. Many of the eggs are considered priceless. Some of the rare specimens are the California condor, Eskimo

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curlew from British Columbia, whiskered auklet from Alaska. Mr. Doe tells me that the whiskered auklet specimen is the only one in the United States; not even the Smithsonian Institution has one. It seems that the bird is not uncommon in Alaska, but it has the habit of going to the high mountains for nesting, making the finding of a nest extremely difficult.

Of course not all the eggs are in view, as many are in cases; but the arrangement is perfect for inspection. I asked to see the eggs of the painted bunting. Without hesitation Mr. Doe pulled out a drawer, and before me were more than 200 eggs representing the nests of 50 pairs. The eggs were arranged in small, uncovered boxes, each box containing only the eggs found in one nest. Of the fifty nests, after a close inspection I could detect no two eggs exactly alike. Most of these eggs came from Georgia.

Another series of drawers presented 175 sets of eggs of the sharp-shinned hawk, with four, five or six eggs for each nest. Even in this collection the variation in markings and coloration was such that no two nests were alike. Name the specie -- sandhill crane, loon, rail, or what-not -- and presto, the eggs are before you.

Of Extinct Species

Eggs of fifteen species of extinct birds are in the collection. Among them are the passenger pigeon and the sharp-tailed sandpiper. One group showed the only known group of a male and female passenger pigeon with their eggs.

One might ask why so many eggs. Don't forget that Mr. Doe, a graduate of Brown University in the Class of 1888, has been collecting eggs for more than 60 years. He is not an ornithologist by profession, but started the collection as a hobby. The collection of many eggs of one specie of birds emphasizes the wide range in markings and coloration, and raises the question as to why.

Unanswered Question

Is the variation due to the food supply? Mr. Doe thinks not, as he has collected eggs where the various birds, from all appearances, were feeding on the same kind of food, and even then the variation existed. As far as he knows, the answer to the question has not been found.

My only suggestion is that when you are in the vicinity of Gainesville, do not miss seeing what is probably the best collection of bird eggs to be found, which can be seen with so little trouble. Then, again, Mr. Doe is a most congenial man.

I have at different times photographed the painted bunting in Florida. Looking at one egg of this bunting is worth while -- but to be able to see more than 200 of the eggs at one time is really something.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



URBAN FISHER -- One club member reports that his first record of the kingfisher this year was on March 3, when one was seen on a tree branch over Cowhorn Creek where it crosses Edison Avenue. As the creek was in muddy flood at the time, and as it was never renowned as a fisherman's paradise in any season, one wonders what the bird found to eat.

DIFFERENT TERRITORIES -- Evidence that certain species do not adopt their breeding territories immediately on arrival from the south in the spring -- or even for some time afterwards -- is possibly contained in some notes on bronzed grackles in Vale Cemetery. This bird arrived in that territory about mid-March. They have been found there daily ever since, but it seems that they do not spend the night in that section, for they are observed regularly in the evening flying from the cemetery in a southerly direction. On April 1, in the early morning just after daybreak, a flock of them was noticed arriving in the cemetery from a southerly direction.

There has been some indication that other species, too, choose some remote roosting place before settling down in their respective territories for breeding and nesting. Both robins and redwings have been seen behaving in the same manner as the grackles in the vicinity of the cemetery. B. S. Havens

FORCED LANDING -- The hummingbird attracts the attention and admiration of all bird lovers. To me the perfect control of action, up or down, back and forth, seems marvelous.

How many of us have desired to see the bird at rest and get a good look at the wings. It was a long time before I saw one resting on a twig.

But when I saw one resting on the side of a vertical concrete wall, with tail feathers spread like a fan and giving support like a woodpecker -- the feet clinging to the cement knobs above and the head swaying back and forth -- I pinched myself to be sure that I was awake.

The scene was on the entrance porch (12 by 15 feet) of a hotel in Gainesville, Fla. The walls dropped about 30 inches from the wooden ceiling, and were of white-painted concrete. The time was 8:30 in the evening. The sky was cloudy with no moon, so the porch light was on.

The ruby-throat was observed flying in a circle near the ceiling of the porch, evidently trying to find a way out, but would not drop the thirty inches necessary to find an opening. While watching the flight, a mockingbird came in and made a dive for the hummer, but we frightened the mocker away with no damage done. The ruby-throat continued its flight for several minutes and then evidently wanted a rest, so took the only landing space available, the vertical cement wall. The bird was easily caught, without injury, in a butterfly net and put in an observatory to spend the night. The next morning she was photographed and released.

-- J. M. Hollister

MEMBERSHIP -- Perhaps you will be asked about membership in the Schenectady Bird Club. Briefly, you might tell inquirers that active membership dues are \$2 yearly, and associate membership dues \$1 yearly. And don't forget to tell them that the monthly meetings, including the paid-admission ones, are one feature; the various local and more-distant field trips another feature; and FEATHERS and the Bulletin still another. All are included in the membership dues. The dues should be paid to Schenectady Bird Club; Idella M. Heacox, Treasurer; c/o Mohawk National Bank; Schenectady, N.Y.

BULLETINS -- With this month's copy of FEATHERS is being distributed Bulletin No. 1 of the Schenectady Bird Club, devoted to local reports on the Pileated Woodpecker. It was prepared in collaboration with the WGY Science Forum.

There will be more such Bulletins of the club. In preparation now is one summarizing local reports on the purple martin. Still others, to follow later in the year, are scheduled to include the eagle, the egret, and the bob-white. All those having notes of interest concerning these birds are invited to submit their reports.

In the past it has been customary to publish such detailed reports on species or territories in FEATHERS, explaining why issues of our monthly magazine have varied between 8 and 16 pages per issue. More of these longer reports are to be printed separately now as Bulletins.

CENTRAL PARK -- Don't feel too bad if gasoline is not available for hopping all around the landscape this month. Remember that, even when rationing was unheard of, Central Park was an ideal place in which to seek the warblers and other migrant birds -- and it's just as good a place this year.

KARNER TRIP -- The Christmas Census trip has become a local institution, just as it has long been a national one. In fact, the local census trip is about 10 years older than the club itself.

Now there is another annual affair that bids fair to become a local institution. That is the Memorial Day trip into the Karner section, off the main Schenectady-Albany road.

The prairie warbler, a bird that was seen only as a rare transient locally eight or more years ago, was discovered by Dr. Homer D. House, state botanist at Albany, as a bird of the Karner section in 1937. Each year since then has seen the bird increasingly common in that sandy "barrens" section. Last year, for instance, prairie warblers were seen and heard without difficulty, in numerous sections and in numbers.

The chewink and thrasher are among the most common birds of the area, and the trip usually includes songs, if not views of the yellow-breasted chat. A duck hawk and a doe have also been seen on the trips.

With Memorial Day on Sunday this year, the Karner trip is being planned on an "all-out" basis. Those planning on participating should check in with Esly Hallenbeck, field trip chairman, or with Guy Bartlett a few days in advance. Meet at Stop 22 (Old Stop 17), Albany Road, at 9 a.m.

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THE FATE OF THE CRESCENT HERONRY

Malcolm Andrews

Back at the start of this present century the first small group of black-crowned night herons decided to rear their young at the now familiar swampy peninsula section along the Mohawk River near Crescent.

At first there were only a few nests, but gradually the colony grew. From a small section near the end of the peninsula it rapidly expanded until the entire swampy area was taken over by the nesting herons. During these years it was not uncommon to find several hundred pairs nesting there regularly.

Unfortunately, due to the dropping of excrement by the nesting birds much, if not all, of the foliage on trees and bushes below the nests was burned away. This did not bother the herons and, there being no humans present other than occasional bird students, the condition was completely tolerated.

Enter the Camper

Man, however, eventually entered upon the scene. About fifteen years ago summer camps sprang up along the outer edge of the peninsula. Within several years quite a few were built and a number of people had moved in as summer residents. Life apparently centered about Normandin's store and restaurant.

As was to be expected, the campers did not see eye-to-eye with the herons, so far as cleanliness of living quarters was concerned. The camps were being built nearer and nearer to the heronry; and the herons were extending their nesting site back more and more from the center of the swamp and in the direction of the camps. Resentment against the filthy habits of the herons increased more and more.

It should be mentioned that, in addition to defoliating the trees, the herons failed to keep many of their young from falling helplessly out of their nests to the ground. Unprotected, these young fell easy prey to hawks, crows, etc. The carcasses strewn about on the ground certainly did not add to the beauty of the place. A few years ago several men, trying for flash pictures by night of the herons' nesting activity,

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surprised a fox feeding on one of the young, just freshly fallen from the nest.

A Diminishing Colony

There has been a drastic decrease in the nesting population of the heronry in the past few years. In April of last year the writer and several others visited the heronry and counted only a few dozen birds present.

This year brought the total number of "quawks" down to zero. Not one was seen or heard when the locality was visited on May 2 by several SBC members, including the writer. Some of last year's nests could be seen in the trees, and several old nests were found on the ground. No evidence that the birds had started nesting activity could be found anywhere.

The Explanation

Inquiries at Normandin's revealed that the authorities had issued a permit for removing the nests. Last year the owner of the land had cut many of the nests down after the nesting season. For that reason the herons had apparently given up trying to nest in that locality -- and thus the fate of the Crescent heronry.

A New Colony

On the same trips as those to Crescent last year and this year the writer visited the growing colony of black-crowned night herons along a secluded and highly inaccessible pond opposite Niskayuna. Last year more than 100 birds were there, and engaged in nesting-building activity. This year an estimated 200 or more were there, and much nest building and repairing were going on.

Possibly some of the former Normandin herons helped swell the colony's numbers this year. Due to the inaccessibility of this heronry and the highly untenable type of swampy land surrounding it, the coming years should see it become the predominant night heron nesting locality in the Schenectady region.

RED - HEADED

Donald Buckley, Nott Terrace High School Bird Club

On the 15th of May five members of the Nott Terrace High School Bird Club were strolling through Vale Cemetery. As they rounded the eastern loop of the road around the lake, they came upon a red-headed woodpecker sitting upon a fence post. He was outlined against the sky, and his red head stood out clearly against the pale blue.

Apparently not in the least bit frightened or disturbed by our approach, he flew to a maple tree. There the red of his head and the white of his breast contrasted sharply with the black of the tree as he clung in profile.



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SCHENECTADY BIRD CLUB
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 Mrs. Anna Dickerman, Editor
 1088 Dean St., Schenectady, N.Y.

This red-headed woodpecker was the find of the year for the N. T. H. S. Bird Club, and they gazed on his beauty for almost fifteen minutes. He took every pose we could have asked for before he flew across the pond.

The next morning, the 16th, a Schenectady Bird Club member went to the cemetery and saw two of these beautiful red-heads. That same evening a party from Scotia came over to Vale Cemetery to search for the woodpeckers, and were soon rewarded as two were found near the pond, on the trunks of the old trees.

Another red-head went to college. At any rate, one was discovered in the Union College garden.

If we can't find pileateds, red-headed woodpeckers are next best.

BLUEBIRDS = V-GARDEN HELPERS

Victor C. Brownson, Liberty, N.Y.

Bluebirds are becoming less numerous each year, due in large part to a diminution in available cavity nesting places to which they have been accustomed. The abandoned woodpecker holes, favorite nesting places for these birds, are being taken over entirely by starlings. During recent years tree denistry in local apple orchards closes many of their former nesting places and the ever-present starling appropriates those cavities overlooked by the tree surgeon. The bluebird is thus gradually becoming a bird without a home.

Appropriate Houses

This situation may be easily corrected to the benefit of all if interest of the public generally is awakened sufficiently to the plight of the bluebird, to induce individuals to place properly constructed bird houses about lawns and gardens, six to ten feet above ground, on top of poles or even nailed to fenceposts. The bluebird will occupy a nesting box of most any shape, provided it is of the single-compartment type with the entrance hole, 1-1/2 inches in diameter, located

close to and protected by the overhang of the roof, with the floor of the box four to six inches below the opening and the room cross section about four by four inches.

Garden Aid

The bluebird, among the first to arrive in the spring and the last to leave in the fall, will be of immense benefit to the present-day Victory gardener, because a favorite item of diet for this bird is the garden cutworm. A single bird box elevated at one end of a small garden plot and occupied by a pair of bluebirds will ensure the owner that the garden will be virtually free of cutworms.

Nesting places for these attractive birds are becoming drastically depleted, but this condition lends itself readily to correction with great benefit to the home owner. While it is now late to think of boxes for the bluebirds this season, it is not too early to prepare for next year's bluebirds -- and for better gardens.

KARNER'S PRAIRIE COLONY

The annual Memorial Day trip into the Karner sand section proved several things to the dozen who made the trip by bus. One was that there are numerous kinds of birds to be found along the road between the bus stop and that first stopping place a mile back -- the stopping place which, back in those days when hikes were made with private cars, was where bird observations really started.

Just back from the bus stop was a Virginia rail with downy young. Starlings and robins nested in the same apple tree. A pair of rose-breasted grosbeaks were nest-building, and an extra male was much in evidence. The birds did not feel like concealing themselves, crossed the road repeatedly, and once flew low between two observers who were hardly six feet apart. Nearly fifty species of birds were observed. Thrashers and towhees were as numerous and as tame as usual.

The Memorial Day trip always has the same key bird. The hike is chiefly to observe the prairie warbler, well established as a bird of that territory. Each year the story has been the same. The prairie warblers are gradually expanding into more territory -- this year their records began only a short distance back from the school at the edge of the sandy area.

Each year the story has also been the same in still another respect -- the prairies are always easy to hear but difficult to locate and to see at close range.

FEATHERS

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SUMMER WARBLERS

Barrington S. Havens

Spring means many things to the average bird student, but to expert and novice alike it has this in common: it's warbler time. For after the redwings have arrived and the first migrants have passed through, each new arrival -- although eagerly awaited and carefully recorded -- seems but another signpost along the annual road to the warbler invasion. As April draws toward its close, everyone is on the alert to discover the first palm or myrtle or pine, and by the first of May, with its punctual black-and-whites and black-throated greens, we're all set for the Big Push.

For a week or two the woods are literally full of warblers. Then they begin to taper off. And, by the end of June, the travelers have passed on to their breeding grounds, and the birds have settled down locally to the business of raising families.

Spring Only?

To most of us, unfortunately, that's all there is to our warbler study until next spring. We know that yellows breed here, and yellowthroats there, but we feel that the warblers have left us for another year. True, they'll come through again in the fall on their way south for the winter, but their plumage in most cases is duller, and the great quantities of first-year birds make it difficult to identify them -- even if the leaves did not interfere with good vision.

But let's examine the situation a little more closely. Are they all gone? Must we be content with a few yellows and yellowthroats? Any examination of the records, and any real field study, will provide an answer decidedly in the negative. Let's look over the records for a few species, in their A.O.U. order.

Our Twenty-two Summer Warblers

Black and white warbler Although this species is uncommon as a summer resident, it can be found in this territory and is worth looking for.

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Worm-eating warbler This is a rare summer resident, but it has been found at Ravena, below Albany, for several years. More recently it has been found to spend the summer in the Indian Ladder ravine.

Golden-winged warbler This is considered a "local" summer resident here; that is, it spends the summer in certain specific spots and breeds there. This year, for example, it is known to be staying in the Niskayuna section; other years have provided records in the Rotterdam hills.

Nashville warbler Another local summer resident, with breeding records. Previous summers have had records in the general vicinity of the Balltown Road.

Yellow warbler A common summer resident, breeding here. This species is one of those we expect to find; it would be unusual not to find it.

Magnolia warbler This is another local summer resident, with breeding records in previous years. The job, of course, is to find where it is staying.

Black-throated blue warbler Not an easy one to find, but the records say: Local summer resident, breeds. Recent records include the Berne swamp and Consaulus Vlaie.

Myrtle warbler An occasional summer resident. Normally this species is considered a faithful sign of higher altitudes, but it occasionally stays here. Not so many years ago quite a number stayed the summer throughout our territory.

Black-throated green warbler A not uncommon local summer resident, breeding. Although not widely distributed throughout this area, it can almost surely be turned up if one looks in the right spots, such as the region back of Indian Ladder, in the Sandsea Kill ravine, etc.

Cerulean warbler Here is a species that some old-timers have never seen locally, but there are a few records of it as a summer resident below or near Albany.

Blackburnian warbler A local summer resident. A good place to look is in the woods at the higher altitudes.

The stout-sided warbler A common summer resident, breeding here regularly.

Pine warbler Not uncommonly a local summer resident, breeding.

Prairie warbler A local summer resident, breeding. The colony in the Karkers pine barrens is well established.

Ovenbird The "teacher" bird with which we are all so familiar. It is, of course, a common summer resident in our woods.

Northern water-thrush The records say it is a local summer resident, and any new records would be very worthwhile additions to our store of information.

Louisiana water-thrush An uncommon summer resident. The chances of finding it are better than those of its first cousin above. It breeds here, when it stays.

Mourning warbler Here's one worth looking for. Its striking markings and distinctive song are easily recognized when one is familiar with them. It is considered an occasional local summer resident, and is known to breed in the Catskills and not far to the north of us.

Northern yellowthroat Another of the "regulars," this is a common, breeding summer resident.

Yellow-breasted chat The largest of our warblers, this species is always considered a prize find to the bird student. It is considered a local summer resident, and it breeds here when it stays. Several spots have been marked down in past summers where it has been found, but it is difficult to depend on from one year to the next. Worthwhile localities: the thickets on the lower slopes back of the municipal golf course and the Kärners pine barrens.

Canada warbler An uncommon summer resident, breeds. Even if the foliage prevents identifying the bird by sight, it can usually be identified without difficulty if one learns its song.

Redstart Another "old faithful." This species is a common, breeding summer resident, pretty easily recognized by eye or ear.

More Data Needed

Thus, instead of the few which many feel are our quota of summer warblers, we have a total of 22 species to look for. Obviously it would be too much to expect, to find all of them in any one season, but they are all decided possibilities. The accumulation of data on these birds as summer residents, particularly breeding data, is a task which is decidedly worth undertaking.

What warblers might we expect to add to our summer list? That is a hard question to answer, but there are some possible additions. The hooded warbler, for example, is a bird of possibilities. It seems to be advancing its territory, and we have had records of it in recent years, although not long enough in any given location to indicate that it was established for the summer.

The parula warbler is still another possibility. It is to be found in other parts of the state. Still others of the warblers could also thus be listed -- but it's just as likely that our next summering warbler will be still something else.

LAKE PLACID IN MAY

Edna L. Dromms

During May I had the good fortune to attend a convention at the Lake Placid Club, so went up a day early to work in a little birding on the side.

The weather here had been cold and rainy as you no doubt remember (Oh! for some of that cool weather now) so I was a bit skeptical as to whether or not the early migrants would have reached there; but was pleasantly surprised to find that the warblers were out in large numbers.

I arrived there on Wednesday evening, May 19, so Thursday morning found me up and out by 6 o'clock. Directly in front of the club house on the shore of Mirror Lake the trees were alive with warblers, the myrtle and chestnut-sided being very abundant. In addition, the Blackburnian, magnolia and black-throated blue were also found in large numbers.

Immature black-polls

I was interested in learning to identify more warblers, so spent most of my time with them, and as a result had only thirty species on my check-list, but felt well repaid since it included two immature black-polls. After having never seen even an adult black-poll, it was a great satisfaction to identify two of the immature birds.

138 Species for Placid

The Lake Placid Club has a bird-study leader at the club each season during July and August. According to the records which H. W. Hicks, secretary of the club, loaned to me, I find that H. H. Axtell, the leader for the seasons 1938-1941 had recorded 138 species. I had recorded a Cape May warbler, and it is interesting to note that Mr. Axtell recorded it for three summers as a late summer migrant. According to that, it does not breed around there. Likewise, the cowbird is very rare, with one juvenal recorded in 1939 and one adult in June 1938. According to Mr. Axtell's list, the wood thrush, that was singing so beautifully mornings and evenings when I was there in mid-May, was recorded as being seen on three days in August in Elizabethtown, so that it apparently does not nest around the Lake Placid Club.

Rudd Stone of Schenectady is the leader at the Lake Placid Club this season. The territory is indeed rich in bird life, and I wish that the Schenectady Bird Club could at some future date spend a week-end there, for I am sure it would be a worthwhile trip. To get some of the birds that frequent the higher altitudes would necessitate climbing some of the mount-

ains, but that would make the trip more interesting. It has been very interesting to compare notes, for in several cases birds I recorded in mid-May were not recorded again until late summer, proving they were migrants.

Mr. Hicks, who sent me the records for previous years, has very generously offered to assist if he can help the club arrange a trip to Placid. I sincerely hope transportation and conditions will be straightened out by next spring. Perhaps we could all enjoy a grand week-end at the Lake Placid Club.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF



CAN YOU HELP? -- I would like to report a beautiful bird I saw Tuesday, June 29. He was on the roof of the porch outside my bedroom window and was facing me, about four feet away. He hopped, and was the size of a robin, had a fan-shaped tail with white zig-zag end, and no white on the sides of the tail. The body was a dull grayish, not brown or black.

What impressed me most was a green (sort of emerald) collar that stood up like a ruche all around his neck. My brother-in-law, who is quite an expert on birds, says "they aint so such feathered critter." However, I saw him and I hope someone will report he too has seen him.

... Lillian C. Allen

SUCCESS FOR THE PHOEBES -- The pair of phoebes in Niskayuna which have been referred to frequently as having a hard time rearing a family met with some success this season. They first started to build their nest over the usual second-story window on the north side of the house but, bothered by the usual English sparrows, finally built over the shed door. On June 22 two young took wing.

... Guy Bartlett

BULLETIN 3, THE EGRET -- In collaboration with the WGY Science Forum, the Schenectady Bird Club has now issued two Bulletins based on reports received by WGY as a result of talks by Barrington S. Havens of SBC. The first bulletin was on the pileated woodpecker; the second on the purple martin. The next bulletin will summarize reports on the American egret. Send in your records to the WGY Science Forum, or turn them over to our Records Committee.

BUFFALO SPRING CENSUS -- Members of the Buffalo Ornithological Society recorded 21,715 individuals of 180 species during their annual spring census, made May 16. Ice was still to be seen along the Canadian shore of Lake Erie and in the Niagara River. The Buffalo club has announced that, because of wartime restrictions, field trips for the organization have been suspended. "Members are urged to make as many personal observations as they can, particularly of nesting birds within a definite area," the club announced.

FEATHERS

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the birds looked like English sparrows and consorted with that species. He said the birds were not quite pure white but were whitish all over, with the wings slightly darker.

WHITE SPARROWS -- At noon on July 6, when Charles Schville went home to lunch at 2027 Campbell Avenue, he observed not one but two albino English sparrows in his yard. Queried on his identification, he said he based it on the fact that

URBAN OSPREY -- During the afternoon of May 17, just before a storm broke, an osprey soared over lower State Street, coming from the direction of the river. I had been watching pigeons battle the wind, when the larger bird appeared, very high, soaring straight into it. The over-long wings and fanned tail were backed up by the nearly pure white underparts as the big bird suddenly banked into a gust.

... P. S. Miller

UPLAND PLOVERS -- When Howard Cleaves, president of the Staten Island Bird Club, was a guest in Schenectady in May, he added another to the list of places where the upland plover can be found. He saw a pair along Route 20, two and a half miles beyond the army warehouse.

JUNE EAGLE -- Among local records for Rudd Stone in June were an immature bald eagle, the chat, and golden-winged warbler.

MORE SWALLOWS -- The large gravel pit along the unpaved road just south of the Watervliet Reservoir has been a nesting site for a small colony of bank swallows for several years. This year the number has definitely increased, so it is now a large colony occupying many unused sections of the pit.

... Nelle Van Vorst

SYMBOLIC -- We quote an item in Van's column of the Gazette of June 17:

"A Quaker Street victory farmer reports seeing an eagle in a tree near that village Monday. He had an opportunity to examine the bird with field glasses and thus feels fairly certain of his identification. A flock of crows were circling about the eagle, cawing excitedly. 'This, to me, represented the present world conflict,' writes the farmer, 'Mr. Eagle being the U. S. A., while the crows and smaller parasites of the air flew about nervously as do the insects of the Berlin paperhanger.'"

ORCHARD ORIOLE -- On June 7 a male orchard oriole in first nuptial plumage was found in Guilderland Center, not far from where such orioles nested in 1940 and 1941. No orchard orioles were recorded there in 1942.

... N. V. V.

FEWER WHIP-POOR-WILLS -- This spring the whip-poor-wills have been very few and far between at Hilltop, Niskayuna. They

have not been "whipping" very much so far this year. Ordinarily they are quite noisy and disturbing.

... Dr. Charles G. McMullen

MAY GEESE -- On May 17 two Canada geese were feeding along Black Creek in Guilderland Center. They were seen twice during the afternoon, the last time taking off toward the south.

... N. V. V.

URBAN ORIOLES -- The other day an oriole came to the yard and, while I was hoping he would induce others of his clan into the neighborhood, there was a flash of bright wings, and four others appeared. It was very exciting. They ate bread and apples. They weren't seen in the next couple of days, and perhaps reverted to a different diet. ... Anna Dickerman

INDIGO MNEMONIC -- If all indigo buntings sing alike (which is extremely doubtful), there is an excellent mnemonic to help remember the song. On a recent walking trip I heard one sing the principal parts of the verb to sing, as follows: "sing-sing-sung-sung-sang-sang-singing-singing!"

... Barrington S. Havens

ANGRY BIRDS --

Early the other morning I heard a great bird disturbance in the maple tree in the yard, and hurried out to find the tree full of angry, frightened orioles. Concealed in the foliage was a grackle. I drove him out of the tree and he flew, pursued by two orioles.

... A. D.

DOWNED NESTS -- Niskayuna had a heavy thunderstorm late in the afternoon of June 26, preceded by a heavy, limb-downing wind. That evening and on the following day it was very apparent that many bird nests had suffered. In the immediate vicinity of the house a baby yellow-throated vireo was clamoring for, and receiving, attention of its parents; two catbirds, unable yet to fly, were likewise clamoring in a patch of meadow grass; a robin nest with eggs in a grape vine was destroyed; a catbird nest with eggs in a lilac bush was drowned out and abandoned. More diligent search would probably have revealed even more damage. ... Guy Bartlett

CLOSE VIEW -- While I was standing in the woods, a sharp-shinned hawk flew by in perfect silence, sailing without wing flaps about a foot or two above the ground. He lit for a moment on a fallen log and then moved one. All this without the faintest sound. Possibly this is one of the ways in which the hawk seeks out its prey.

... B. S. H.

MORE GOLDEN-WINGS -- For several years the golden-winged warbler has summered in part of the area along the Lisha Kill between the Troy and Rosendale roads. This year Barry Havens and the writer independently obtained late May and June records of the warbler in extended territory, between the Lisha and the Mohawk Road. Various reports for this year show that the Henslow's sparrows are becoming widespread locally, and in goodly numbers.

... G. B.

OUR OWLS MAKE HEADLINES

Schenectady certainly made the headlines recently with stories of its owls. Herewith are some of the many items. In the first column two items from Van's column in the Gazette of May 24 and June 26; a Gazette item of June 23 in the second column; a Union Star item of June 22 at the bottom; and in the third column a New York Sun editorial of June 26.

MRS. R. D. THOMSON got the surprise of her life a few nights ago when a large owl swooped down on her from a tree near the First Reformed church. Mrs. Thomson had been walking quietly down the street when there was a sudden rush of wings and the owl struck at her hat. She beat the bird off and it flew to a nearby tree. . . . Mrs. Thomson then started to walk away but curiosity got the better of her and she turned back to see if she could see the place where the owl was roosting. Something warned her to look up before she reached the tree and she had just time to dodge the bird's second attack. She retreated and left the street to the owl.

P. SCHUYLER MILLER, who among other things is a more than fair naturalist, says that residents who have complained of being attacked by owls have a right to be annoyed but that they shouldn't blame the owls too much. He explains that in almost all cases of owls attacking humans without apparent reason there is a nest of young owls somewhere in the immediate vicinity and the parent birds, fearing the passerby are seeking the nest, try to drive animals and people from the area.

Screech Owl Attacks Game Protector

Following reports of persons being attacked by screech owls in the vicinity of Veeder and Summit avenues, District Game Protector Chester Griffith went hunting last night again and fired at three birds with a small gauge shotgun, although he claimed no score.

One of the birds he shot at swooped down and attacked Griffith, who had to duck to evade the bird.

Henry Miller, night watchman on the housing development on Veeder avenue reported to police that he was attacked Monday night by about 15 or 20 birds that swooped down out of trees, snapped their beaks close to his ears and knocked his hat off. Miller avoided further attacks while making his rounds by swinging a club continuously about his head.

The large flock of owls was first reported to Griffith Monday and he consulted the conservation department which advised him to shoot the birds if they were molesting persons. That night he shot and recovered one owl. Firing three times last night, he saw feathers flying through the air after two of the shots, but recovered no birds and he is not sure whether any was killed.

The game protector said that flocks of the birds in this area are not uncommon although it is unusual for the birds to attack human beings. The birds are protected by game laws, he said, and are very beneficial in cleaning up mice, bugs and dead birds.

When Owls Go Berserk.

The calling in of the game protector in Schenectady to dispose of owls which attacked humans brings attention to the interesting disclosure that it is only in the months of June and July that these birds discard their vaunted wisdom by inviting reprisals from mankind. A search of current history on owls, as represented in a newspaper reference library, develops a striking coincidence of dates. In other months owls predicate their publicity on getting into strange situations or disturbing slumbering communities with their hootings. But in June and July they occasionally go berserk.

It was in July, 1931, that possums were formed in Flushing to go after five owls frightening pedestrians. Eight policemen with rifles and searchlights were too much for them. Just nine years ago this week Douglaston was up in arms over what it considered the "mad" owls in that village. There was a similar battle between owls and man in North Tarrytown on July 1, 1937. In late June of 1938 residents of Staten Island were terrified by snapping beaks and wings flapping in the dark. When in July, 1939, a policeman in Flushing, summoned by scared residents, shot two owls, it was thought they might have been resentful over being driven from their homes in the nearby meadows by the noise and lights of the World's Fair.

To LEE S. CRANDALL, curator of birds at the New York Zoological Society's zoo in the Bronx, belongs credit for a reminder of what appears to be the answer. This is the time of year, he says, when owlets are leaving the nests and venturing forth on their first nocturnal forays. Parental solicitude for the young birds is intensified; in every approaching person the older owls see a threat. They forget their normal habits and give battle instead of retiring quietly to their perches. Considering the pitfalls which beset the young of all species, the action of these feathered parents is not only understandable but may enhance rather than reduce their long standing reputation for sagacity.

Ferocious Owl's Antics Halted Because He's Dead Bird Today

A screech owl about the size of a roasted squab and with the ferocity of a wildcat given the hotfoot, now lies a foot or more under the sod, dead as a door nail, all because it felt it was too big for its britches. The term "britches" is used advisedly. The bird wore none when shot last night.

When alive, however, it felt big enough to attack people up around Summit Ave., and a few days ago and a hurry-up call was put through to Chester Griffith, assistant district game protector, who just isn't

amazed at anything in Schenectady any more. Two years ago, for instance, he captured a squirrel which had gone berserk and was attacking Schenectadians.

At any rate the screech owl, which, when released from all inhibitions, scratched up a woman's face and nearly put her eye out, became a doomed critter, Game Protector Griffith, first checking with city police about the use of bird shot, obtained an official OK and went up on Summit Ave. and spotted the bird. A blast from the gun and the owl-that-went-outlandish was a dead cuckoo.

FEATHERS

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SUMMER AT THE LADDER

Nelle Van Vorst

Each year members of the Schenectady Bird Club visit several nearby places to watch some special nesting species. This year has certainly presented many obstacles which have been overcome by some, so that most of the places have been visited at least once. It was not until June 27 that a trip was made to the Indian Ladder Ravine.

A few S B C members walking from Guilderland Center thru Meadowdale to the foot of the old carriage road were richly rewarded by their findings for the day. The usual summer residents were seen and heard in many places, and often an unexpected sparrow or horned lark would appear.

Henslow's, Common

A careful check was made of the Henslow's sparrow since this bird is certainly becoming one of the common roadside sparrows. We heard them in fields between Guilderland Center and the ravine.

About one mile north of Meadowdale a small flock of swallows attracted attention as they were busy carrying mud to their nests, seemingly under repair for their second broods. It was soon discovered there were several cliff swallows and a few barn swallows. This record established the second nesting colony of cliff swallows in that area.

Songs Aplenty

It was surprising to hear so many bird calls throughout the day since it was very warm. Many times an indigo bunting would be seen perched on a wire or at the top of a small tree, in song.

A flash of red of the tanager as he flew to a tall Norway spruce was an eye-catcher. All these made the slow progress of the trip less tiresome.

Worm-eaters

The main object of the trip was to determine if the worm-

eating warbler was again nesting in the ravine, as it had so many years. Walking up the old carriage road, the hikers listened for the calls of the resident warblers and thrushes. Just as they reached the really wooded section they eagerly looked for and listened for their special warbler. Soon the sharp chip note of a bird led them to the side of the road. A small bird with a strikingly striped head made his appearance. They had found their warbler at home.

Sitting down along the opposite side of the road, the group watched him for several minutes and then moved on without looking for the nest, so disturbed by the intrusion was the bird.

In the afternoon, as the hikers trudged along the hot pavement toward Altamont, the now familiar call of the Henslow could be heard almost constantly. At times the singer would be so near -- perched usually on a dead weed stalk or a small bush -- that the group could watch him call.

Dr. Gilbert's Swallows

The group had planned to watch, on the return trip, for the swallows on Dr. Ruth Gilbert's farm where last year the S B C members had discovered a colony of cliff swallows. As they approached the barns, which had been repaired and changed somewhat since last year, they were concerned since no swallows were darting about.

Soon, however, they saw and heard many swallows -- some barns and more cliffs. Dr. Gilbert called attention to strips of wood fastened several inches below the eaves for the cliff swallows, and also to the holes made specially for the barn swallows. The cliff swallows soon had discovered the new housing project, and at least 25 well-cemented mud nests were occupied -- and there was room for many more.

Bird of the Tangle

Again walking proved advantageous when the hikers heard, and finally saw, the yellow-breasted chat in a bushy tangle about half way to Altamont. This helped to complete the expected records for the day, since last year the chat was found at the foot of the ravine. He had also been found there earlier this year, but not on this trip.

While making a trip at this time of the year has its disadvantages, it also has its advantages as most of the singing and calling is done from the nesting territory, thus furnishing something in the way of breeding records.

With a list of sixty for the day, it would seem as if most, if not all, were breeding residents.

And next summer's trip into this same territory is expected to indicate still further they are breeding residents.

BREWSTER'S WARBLER

Dorothy W. Caldwell, Brookline, Mass.

Fortunately, some jaded war workers can find relaxation and fresh incentive in bird study. Such folk may be restrained by gasoline restrictions but when they find themselves in need of a change of scene, even the wartime ban on pleasure driving does not entirely daunt them. Using available train and bus facilities, a trio of S B C members staged a miniature camp-out near Pittsfield on June 20 and 21.

Marsh Dwellers

Sunset Saturday night found them at the north end of Lake Pontoosuc, listening to the evening chant of the veery and the strange voices of the marsh dwellers, the chatter of marsh wren and swamp sparrow, and the calls of the least bittern and Florida gallinule. Before daybreak Sunday, the early robin chorus found them off for the marshes again. By boat they explored the reedy "islands" and the winding channels, and even one of the little inlets of the lake. This time they saw black and wood ducks and several gallinules, identified the marsh wren as the long-billed, and finally had several fine glimpses of a pair of least bitterns. Too late they learned that, had they followed the narrow, winding little brook (bordered by tufted loosestrife and other pleasant growing things) farther up into its meadow, they might have found the short-billed marsh wren also at home to them.

An Unidentified Warbler

After breakfast, served invitingly on the lawn, they proceeded by bus to Pittsfield and part way to Lenox. As they walked down the delightfully shaded country road to the Pleasant Valley Sanctuary, they stopped to investigate the source of insistent "chip" notes from nearby shrubs and trees, and easily located a dainty warbler with a golden crown, golden wing-bars, a pale throat, and gold on its breast. It suggested a possible female golden-winged warbler but was not quite reconcilable with the description of this bird.

Ovenbirds, veeries, nuthatches, green heron, redstarts, and both red-eyed and blue-headed vireos were surprisingly vocal for a warm June mid-day.

Arriving at the Sanctuary, they had a pleasant chat with the new director, S. Waldo Bailey; admired the mountain laurel and the showy lady's slippers; and learned that the bird that puzzled them was probably a Brewster's warbler.

Fortified by Mrs. Bailey's refreshing iced tea, the walk of a mile and three-quarters back to the bus seemed very short.

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Also, the strange warbler called again from the same spot, obligingly showed himself several times, each time with a worm in his mouth and always disappearing into the same bit of undergrowth.

It was then definitely identified as a Brewster's warbler, and probably a nesting one at that. It is the commoner of the two hybrids between the golden-winged and blue-winged warblers, an entirely new bird for the trio of S B C pedestrians -- and a bird they would have serenely passed by had they been traveling to the sanctuary by automobile instead of on foot.

FULL OF GRIT

W. L. Merrill

I have watched a pair of robins close to my window during the hatching-flying away period. There was nothing unusual, or anything but what has been recorded many times, except for one feature noted below.

During the last two or three days of feeding the fledglings there was a round trip every four to six minutes right until dark, as near as I could judge. Apparently there was a bountiful supply of worms in the lawn adjacent to the tree containing the nest. On the next to the last day the fledglings were so large that they hardly were able to stay in the nest. There was great commotion and flapping of wings when the mother appeared, with the four necks and heads extending so high that the mother actually had to reach up to deliver the worms. Her attitude seemed to indicate she was pretty much disgusted. On the next to the last day she was on the schedule of four to six minutes, with no chance of appeasing the appetites. She then disgustedly flew to the ground and commenced to pick up little pebbles and grit, and made many trips until she had all the crops filled. During the last few trips she made there was no enthusiasm and no raising of heads to receive further food.

She went off and sat on a limb, and called it a day. The next morning at 6:30 o'clock the nest was empty. She, however, was to be seen later feeding her youngsters and teaching them to get their own grub.

The feeding of grit is probably one of nature's routine arrangements, but I never happened to have seen it or read about it. I wonder if other bird-watchers have seen the same.

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LONG TRAIL IN JULY

Idella M. Heacox

Perhaps the nicest part of our taking the Long Trail vacation in July instead of August as heretofore was the greater abundance of bird life.

We had climbed only about half a mile on the Trail when the white-throated sparrows burst into song for us, and from then on we heard them every day except one. At our first night's shelter the olive-backed thrushes drowned out the songs of all other birds, although the black-throated green warblers were a close second. We never did see the olive-backed, but we had several good chances to study the black-throated green. Another bird that came quite close to the lean-to several times was the oven-bird.

After a Shower

One afternoon, after a thunderstorm, the sun came out looking doubly bright against the dark thunderheads just retreating. We sat in a lean-to in the midst of a lumber clearing, with a stream to the right. With the sun came the birds. A cedar waxwing sat in the top of a scrub apple tree. Along the edge of the road a wood thrush hopped around a mud puddle, acting very much like his relative the robin. A song sparrow gobbled food, sang, and then gathered food again. In two tall evergreens nearby several warblers hopped around, looking like tree ornaments as the yellow would flash for an instant. In a tree just beyond the one in which the waxwing sat, a pair of northern yellow-throats tried to satisfy the appetites of their children, who were perched on the limbs of the tree.

Nesting Swallows

All this time some barn swallows were flying around and around the lean-to in the endless fashion of swallows. Suddenly one of us looked up, and there on the inside of the front edge of the roof was a nest. Climbing up on the table, we found that the eggs had hatched and that the babies were waiting to be fed. Perhaps if we had stayed there long enough the parents would have overcome their fears and fed the babies, for before we left they were coming closer and closer



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under the roof, but just couldn't summon enough courage to complete the last three or four feet. Feeling sorry for both the babies and the parents, we left very shortly.

Just a little way up the trail from there a winter wren sang beautifully and then followed us a short distance along the trail, probably watching us although we could not find him.

Plentiful Juncos

The juncos with their cymbal notes were all along the trail. In fact, they were the most plentiful bird. Near the Little Rock Pond lean-to we discovered a nest with three eggs in it. Every time we went to the spring we disturbed them, so close to the path was the nest.

We failed to see one thing we had hoped for on this trip. That was the hawks taking advantage of the air currents over the valleys. We had seen this on previous trips, and there is something decidedly thrilling about looking down from the mountain tops on these big birds. But that was the only disappointment. The rest of the trip was a huge success.

ON THE OPEN OCEAN

Dorothy W. Caldwell

An unusual bird trip came my way early in August -- or perhaps I should say that I was fortunate in being able to go its way. An opportunity to go birding by boat is a rare treat for me; and to go out for pelagic birds with binoculars left at home in their case -- well, that was an experience. The occasion was a Brookline Bird Club trip from Boston to Provincetown and return by steamer. Our leader was Miss Grace Snow, the guiding spirit of the club, an authority on Massachusetts birds at sea as well as on land, whose skillful and kindly help made the use of binoculars almost unnecessary. At least I did not miss mine as much as I had expected.

The weather was ideal, and the glimpse of Boston harbor in war-time was most interesting. Also there were many gulls about, mostly herring gulls but occasional laughing gulls as well, and we saw a few characteristically flying double-crested cormorants.

When we reached the open ocean we saw few birds indeed, except for the gulls that followed in our wake. About the

first hour out a very dark bird, about half the size of a cormorant, crossed our bow and we had our first, and only, shearwater -- and a sooty shearwater at that, a species not commonly seen in Massachusetts waters, and a life-bird for me.

At Provincetown

As the dunes of Provincetown became faintly visible in the distance we began to see small, dark, swallow-like birds flying close to the surface of the water, and occasionally as they veered in flight we could see a conspicuous white rump patch. These were Wilson's petrels, the common summer petrel of the western north Atlantic. They breed, says Forbush, "during the Antarctic summer in the Southern Hemisphere; then wing their way northward toward the top of the world, making a journey of about 7,000 miles; and pass the period of extreme Antarctic winter in the North Atlantic Ocean -- and appear in numbers near our coast in June, July and August."

Our stop at the Provincetown dock was so brief that I stayed on the steamer with Miss Snow and profited by her keen, well-trained eyes and ears as we watched the terns wheel overhead, sometimes coming so close to the deck that even I, with her help, could see there were several species present. She heard the least tern some minutes before it flew so near and in such a good light that we both saw the yellow bill. Common terns were all about us, with occasional roseate terns in their especially graceful flight and with their characteristic call note. And once an Arctic tern came so close that even that species could be clearly identified.

Gull Escort

On the return trip we had an increased escort of laughing gulls. When Provincetown was dim in the distance the gulls were joined by three Wilson's petrels which followed closely in our wake for an hour or so while scores, perhaps hundreds, played all about us. A little later, when we were far out to sea, someone spotted a small bird near the boat that suggested a sanderling in its flight pattern, and our leader knew that we had at last found one of the phalaropes, for which we had searched in vain on the trip out. A phalarope in flight was a new experience for me, but Peterson's Field Guide corroborated Miss Snow's identification of a northern phalarope. Later three more flew so close to the steamer we could identify them. Again, near Boston, we all had another excellent view of the sooty shearwater.

The list for the day was short and it took close watching to find even these but, thanks to Miss Snow, we had a most stimulating lesson in off-shore bird life, even though binoculars were barred.

The Boston-Provincetown boat trip is certainly one to be recommended, whether the season be spring, summer, or autumn. And when binoculars can again be used, so much the better.



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

RED MARAUDER -- We hear a great deal about the bad habits of the red squirrel as an enemy of bird life. Last spring I was able to get a first-hand glimpse of the depredations of this marauder. Hearing the alarm note of a robin, I investigated. Tracing down the sound, I came to a pine tree with a robin's nest about halfway up it. One of the robins was sitting on a nearby vantage perch, screaming his protest at a red squirrel which sat on the edge of the nest with one of the eggs in his paws, holding the egg up to his mouth. Evidently my arrival had interrupted the squirrel just as he was about to eat the egg. Closer approach sent the squirrel scampering to the top of the tree (minus the egg), whereupon the robin took after the robber. But the squirrel paid no attention to the robin, sitting at the tree top and evidently waiting for me to leave. A poorly aimed stone missed the squirrel, but startled him sufficiently to make him leap from the tree and leave for safer circumstances.

... B. S. Havens

ORCHARD ORIOLES -- A pair of orchard orioles were found again this year in the orchard where they were seen several years in Guilderland Center. On July 12 the male was in full plumage. The pair apparently had chosen a different section of the orchard as their territory this year. ... Nelle VanVorst

SOLUTION -- Out in the west there is a species of woodpecker that insists on drilling hundreds of holes in wooden telephone and power-line poles, there to store nuts. From a recent item in Electrical World we learn of a solution to the problem.

Says the item: "Dummy snakes mounted on several Southern California Edison Co. distribution poles in the Santa Barbara district as an experiment to discourage destruction by woodpeckers have been successful in frightening away birds, but they also have caused considerable consternation among the populace. One gentleman fired a gun at the snake, aroused neighbors and consulted the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History as to the species of reptile. The skeptical curator consulted the Edison Co., and the ruse was confirmed. Realistic reptiles were fashioned of old garden hose, painted with colored stripes and mounted in a striking pose on top of several poles."

A photograph of the "snake" accompanied the item -- it was big enough and gaudy enough to scare any bird.

HUNTING SEASON -- The season on ruffed grouse opens October 1 and through three belts on the state extends until December 15, with hunting legal from a half hour before sunrise to sunset. Ducks are legal prey 70 days, from October 15 thru December 23, with an earlier season in the Lake Champlain region. The wood duck is again a game bird.

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FROM THE DAY BOAT

Beatrice Sullivan

Thirty-two people boarded the Hudson River Day Boat at Albany on Sunday, September 26, for what is now recognized as one of the Schenectady Bird Club's annual trips.

In spite of the damp chill of a lifting fog, some hardy souls planted their chairs as far forward in the bow as possible, but those who wanted their birds in comfort were content with the more sheltered stern -- maintaining they could not only see the birds as well but could watch them longer.

Little by little, however, the whole group established themselves at the stern, much to the amusement and amazement of their fellow passengers.

Eagles Bring Respect

It was interesting to see the amusement change to a certain amount of respectful interest at the mention of the word "eagle." That seemed to change the status -- somewhat as if any eccentric might see a kingfisher but only real experts could find an eagle.

But long before the haunt of the eagle (Markers 65 - 67) was reached there had been other birds: Kingfishers, great blue and black-crowned night herons. The day brought a total of 35 species.

Cotton-peppered Bay

The American egrets were so numerous that along the Rip Van Winkle Bridge and near the marshes at Stockport at one time the glistening water looked like a small bay peppered with cotton. The count of egrets was somewhere around fifty.

From time to time along the east shore large flocks of ducks rose at the passing of a train, but these were too far away for identification.

More Cormorants

The high spot of the trip this year were the cormorants, possibly in from the Maine coast. About a dozen were seen,

and as far north as the Castleton bridge. The bird is apparently increasingly common as an autumn visitor.

While lunch was being eaten out on the rocks at Kingston Point a white-throated sparrow was calling and yellow-bellied sapsuckers were found in the pine grove. Also, robins and catbirds were feeding in a large hackberry tree.

The return was made in the golden sunshine of a perfect end-of-summer day, with the Bird Club members agreeing that the trip had been ideal and should become an established one.

AFIELD, AFLOAT & ALOFT

It was in November, 1939, when the Schenectady Bird Club was only a few months old, that Alexander Sprunt, Jr., spoke at the Club's first open meeting. As field representative of the National Association of Audubon Societies, Mr. Sprunt had as his topic the spectacular birds of the South.

Since then S B C has sponsored several open meetings with nationally recognized speakers. To Mr. Sprunt now goes the record of being the first to be brought back for another such meeting.

"A Naturalist Afield, Afloat and Aloft" is the subject of the talk to be given by Mr. Sprunt at the open S B C meeting in the Nott Terrace High School Auditorium at 8:15 o'clock on Thursday night, October 28. The talk, with special emphasis on conservation, will be illustrated with all-color motion pictures.

Members of the Club are entitled to free admission to the meeting, and tickets have already been distributed. Tickets for others have been made available through members at 35 cents each, including tax, or from Mr. and Mrs. George H. Bainbridge, Miss Nelle Van Vorst, Miss Idella M. Heacox, or Mrs. Chester N. Moore, chairman of the program committee. Tickets will also be on sale that night at the door.

Those who heard Mr. Sprunt when he spoke here four years ago do not need to be told that he has an interesting and well presented program. By reason of his rich experience as a field ornithologist, his intimate knowledge of the problems of wild-life conservation and his work as a writer and lecturer, he is admirably equipped for the work in which he is engaged. Mr. Sprunt, a native of Charleston, S. C., has contributed to many leading magazines, has authored books, and written numerous Audubon Society publications. He has served on many committees concerned with wild-life conservation; has been Curator of Ornithology of the Charleston Museum; and is a member of the American Ornithologists' Union.

BANK SWALLOW BANDING NEAR ALBANY, N.Y.

Dayton Stoner, New York State Museum

After having banded almost 4,000 bank swallows (*Riparia r. riparia*) in Iowa and at Oneida Lake, New York, in the period 1923 to 1932, inclusive, Mrs. Stoner and I began banding work and certain studies incidental thereto on this swallow in the Albany, New York, area in 1933. Since that time (1933 to 1941, inclusive) we have banded here 449 individuals -- 228 adults and 221 young. Within this same period we have banded at Oneida Lake 2,910 additional bank swallows for a grand total of almost 7,500 individuals. Most of the work at Albany has been done in three colonies. Our purpose has been to concentrate efforts in a few colonies that could be studied intensively rather than to aim at perhaps more spectacular results from a purely numerical standpoint.

Of course the chief objective in banding bank swallows, or any other birds for that matter, is sought in their subsequent recovery as returns. In order to be designated as a return, it is necessary that at least eight months intervene between the time the swallow was banded and its subsequent recovery, or between two or more successive recoveries. During the eight-month interval, each return individual presumably completed the round-trip flight between its breeding place and its winter home in South America.

Of the 449 bank swallows banded in the Albany area, we have recovered 14 as returns. Eleven of these were banded as adults, three as young in the nest. Data have been published on two of the returns. Ten others are of more than passing interest in that they throw some light upon the habits and behavior of these interesting and rather temperamental colonial nesting birds. The data on them are set forth briefly in the following paragraphs. All were banded in a small roadside sand pit ten miles west of Albany on U. S. Route 20.

No. H-94144. Immature; one of a family of four and a member of the same family as the following bird (No. H-94146). Banded June 29, 1933. Recovered as a laying or incubating individual, May 31, 1934, in a small roadside sand pit about three miles, air-line, southeast of the point of banding.

No. H-94146. Immature; one of the family of four of which the above bird (No. H-94144) also was a member. Banded from the same burrow, June 29, 1933. Recovered in the same roadside sand pit as that individual on June 4, 1934.

It is of interest to note that both the above birds, members of the same family, returned to breed in the same general locality as that in which they were reared. Moreover, both returned to the same sand pit but this was three miles from

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the one in which they were reared. At the time of recovery the two swallows occupied burrows 12 inches from each other. Of course it is impossible to know, but one wonders whether these two members of this family remained together from the time of leaving the nest to the time of recapture or whether they "happened" to return to the same sand pit independently of each other. This is our only record of such an occurrence.

No. H-94065. Adult; incubating. Banded June 8, 1933. On June 13, 1933, its mate also was banded as No. H-94073, the next following return in this discussion. Recovered as an incubating bird, June 11, 1934, in a roadside sand pit three miles from the point of banding. Its mate here was banded May 31, 1934.

In 1934, then, No. H-94065 had changed its nesting location to a point about three miles southeast of the place of banding and had a different mate than in the preceding season.

No. H-94073. Adult; banded June 13, 1933, as the mate of the immediately preceding bird in this discussion, No. H-94065. Recovered May 31, 1934, in a roadside sand pit three miles southeast of the point of banding and the same one in which No. H-94065 was recovered as a return on June 11, 1934. No. H-94073 also had different mates in two successive seasons. However, its mate in 1933 (No. H-94065) had, in 1934, transferred its breeding place to the same colony, but it, too, had a different mate in 1934. In this latter year, the burrows of the two birds that had been mates the preceding season were but 18 inches from each other in the new breeding place which both had chosen.

No. 35-59319. Adult; incubating. Banded June 17, 1936, from the only inhabited burrow in the sand pit ten miles west of Albany. Recovered June 25, 1937, in the same pit as banded when it occupied one of the two inhabited burrows there. On this date it was brooding young, and its mate was found to be No. 37-55036 which had been banded 18 days earlier and is the next succeeding bird to be mentioned in this discussion.

No. 37-55036. Adult male; incubating. Banded June 7, 1937. Its mate was Return No. 35-59319, the bird discussed last above and recovered on June 25, 1937. No. 37-55036 was recovered on June 1, 1938, from the same sand pit but from a burrow about 20 yards from the one in which it was originally captured. Its mate was banded as No. 38-77920. This swallow nested in the same colony two successive seasons and had a different mate each season.

No. 37-55133. Immature; one of a family of four and the progeny of Return No. 35-59319 and Adult No. 37-55036; banded July 7, 1937. Recovered June 1, 1938, in the same colony but

about 15 yards northeast of the point of banding. This bird had returned to breed in the colony of its nativity when less than one year old. To date it is the only banded bank swallow which we have recovered as a return and, at the same time, whose parents both have been banded and recovered as returns.

No. 38-77916. Adult; incubating. Banded with its mate June 1, 1938. Recovered June 5, 1939, from the same colony with a different mate (banded May 31, 1939). This bird, then, was captured as a nesting individual in the same sand pit two successive seasons but it had a different mate each season.

No. 38-77956. Adult; incubating. Banded June 13, 1938; (its mate had been banded June 1, 1938). Recovered June 2, 1939, in the same colony as banded but with a different (unbanded) mate. This swallow also nested in the same sand pit on two successive seasons and had a different mate each season.

No. 38-77957. Adult; incubating. Banded June 13, 1938; its mate had been banded June 6. Recovered June 3, 1940, in the same colony but with a different (unbanded) mate. This bird was recovered two years after banding at which time it had a different mate than in the season it was banded. At the time of recovery it was at least three years old.

No. 139-35963. Adult female; laying or incubating. Banded June 5, 1939; its mate had been banded May 31. Recovered with a different (unbanded) mate June 3, 1940, in the same colony from a burrow 15 feet east of the one it occupied the previous year.

Some of the points of interest suggested by these and other similar banding experiments which we have conducted on the bank swallow may be summarized as follows:

1. The bank swallow has a well developed homing sense. Adult birds are likely to return to breed in a sand pit where they have once nested, but individuals less than a year old are likely to nest in a different pit from the one in which they were reared although that pit may be in the general locality of the parental pit.
2. Inconstancy of the marital status from season to season is evident. In none of the returns mentioned in this article or any other of our 272 return bank swallows have we ever found a bird with the same mate in two seasons.
3. Some circumstantial evidence is submitted which suggests that although family ties among the young appear to be broken at the time of initial flight, the members of a colony may remain more or less together during their migratory journeys to and from their winter quarters and perhaps also in the territory inhabited during the winter. The close proximity of the burrows of the nesting return individuals in a different colony from the one occupied when they were banded is worthy of consideration in this regard.

BIRDS OF LAKE PLACID REGION

Rudolph H. Stone

When I arrived at the Lake Placid Club June 22nd, one of the most conspicuous birds was the pine siskin. They continued to be conspicuous throughout July but almost vanished after that. Not until mid-September did I see a transient flock on the grounds.

Red crossbills, reported common last year, could not be called common this year. Through the summer I saw several flocks in flight, but almost the only place I saw them at rest was in the tops of a few tall pines outside the Golfery Building where I stayed -- very considerate of the Club to so locate their "bird man." One cloudy, rainy day in August eleven crossbills landed in these pines. One was definitely a white-winged crossbill. I later saw a red crossbill feeding on mountain holly berries. Other interesting finds included:

Bald eagle -- Adult over Lake Placid September 12. Also one over the club's golf course later in September.

Horned grebe -- At Marcy Dam in late August; this is on Marcy Trail.

Broad-winged hawk -- Commonest hawk in the region.

Sparrow hawk -- Along roads in the open country.

Marsh hawk -- Fairly common, second to broad-winged. One seen on summit of Gothic September 22.

Osprey -- Frequent about the lakes; seen twice during the summer.

Duck hawk -- One flew over during August.

Pipit -- Fifteen at summit of Whiteface and four at summit of Gothic, both late in September.

Herring gull -- Lake Placid, September 18.

Arctic three-toed woodpecker -- Very rare; limited to areas including dead tree stands in Beaver Meadows or burnt-over spruce tracts. I found it everytime I visited Chubb River Swamp. This Chubb River area is a rather unusual spot. On three visits during the summer I saw olive-sided flycatchers, winter wrens, Acadian chickadees, scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, Cooper's hawks (pair noisily defending nest I didn't find), red-shouldered hawks, and black-poll, bay-breasted and parula warblers. The last time I visited the Beaver Meadow my prize was a group of

Lincoln sparrows passing through. The Beaver meadow is one mile up the wood road from the highway. Chubb River may be reached from Lake Placid village by following the paved road past the railroad station and past the four corners to the bridge over the creek or river and then following the wood road to the left on the near side for two or three miles.

The road to Chubb River yields indigo buntings, bobolinks, bank swallows, chewinks, rusty blackbirds, etc. Grackles and red-wings may be found in or near Lake Placid village. Cowbirds are also present.

Outside of the Arctic three-toed, the best attractions at Chubb River are possible Canada spruce grouse, Canada jay, white-winged crossbill, American three-toed woodpecker, and goshawk, all of which have been seen there within the past five years during the summer.

The swallow population consists of barn swallows (most abundant), cliff swallows (few), tree swallows (about swampy lake edges), and bank swallows wherever suitable banks exist.

The great blue is the commonest and most conspicuous heron. In past years I have seen bitterns at Marcy Dam; but while black-crowned night herons and green herons do occur, I didn't find any where I looked.

Alder and least flycatchers are common and kingbirds are also present, though not numerous. Curiously, I found no phoebe; maybe the early cold snap last spring killed them off. Also, brown creepers seemed scarce. I have found them as nesting birds near Jenny Lake, in the southernmost foothills, but I didn't hear any until late in September at Placid.

Golden-crowned kinglets are common summer residents, and ruby-crowns were present when I left. Red-breasted nuthatches are abundant, outnumbering white-breasteds by 20 to 1.

Red-eyed and blue-headed are the common vireos through the summer, and blue-headed were singing strongly when I left. I saw and heard one yellow-throated vireo in deep deciduous woods near the Club in July. Philadelphia vireos occur in some numbers around early September, so I am told, but I found none.

Several years ago I saw a migrant shrike on the Heart Lake road, in very open country frequented by marsh and sparrow hawks.

Window Mortalities

One of the things that created the most interest around the Club was the heavy mortality through the summer of birds which struck the large lounge windows bordering the Club greens. A great variety of species hit the windows, but mostly they were olive-backed thrushes, which with hermits were the commonest speckle-breasted thrushes here. Most of the

birds were killed, but sometimes people brought me stunned birds which turn out to be as good as new. I created quite a good deal of interest by demonstrating these birds to the people in the lounges and at my lectures.

One of the cutest of all was a pine siskin with tiny, beady eyes and beautiful flashes of yellow in its wings and tail. They were common at the time. Last year a yellow-billed cuckoo -- all but unknown in the area, and the first record at the club -- killed himself in this manner. His skin now reposes in the Club's collection.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds are present wherever the Club has flower gardens. At one such spot you can always count on finding them. I have seen three at one time. But, strangely enough, not one had the ruby throat. One of the birds to bash the lounge windows was a ruby-throated hummer.

Why birds bash the windows is any one or more of these reasons:

- (1) They see their image and fight it.
- (2) They see the lights inside and are attracted to them, especially at night.
- (3) They don't see glass (they never do) but see reflections of foliage.

Most of the collisions occurred during the mating and nesting seasons. Mostly adults but a few young birds did the colliding.

During June, while on cycling excursions in Schenectady territory, I had the following, among other, records:

Least bittern -- One adult and one young seen at Vischer's Ferry. The Virginia rail and yellow-billed cuckoo also seen there.

Yellow-breasted chat -- Two singing birds, one on the brushy slope above the Crescent bend of the Mohawk, south side; the other on a steep, short, brushy slope on side of road away from the escarpment along Indian Ladder road toward Altamont.

Southern bald eagle -- Immature bird flying up the Mohawk; mobbed by crows, at the Crescent bend.

Golden-winged warbler -- Male singing but not seen when the first chat mentioned above was seen. Male singing long song in woods at edge of Edison Golf Course toward Vischer's Ferry, not far from River Road.

Short-billed marsh wren -- Male singing and observed in grass marsh at Indian Ladder end of Meadowdale country just north of slope facing north with dead tree swamp along base; near road which comes out at Pine Plantation.

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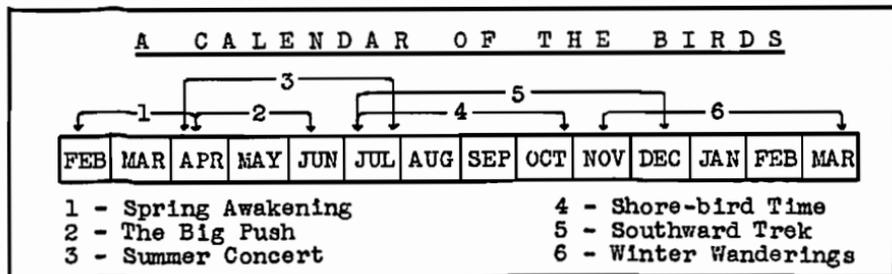
A BIRD CALENDAR

Barrington S. Havens

Is your interest in birds confined to the big spring migration, or do you know your bird calendar well enough to keep in touch with what's going on from one bird season to another? For there are definite bird seasons, and once you know them you can find something interesting going on during every month in the bird year.

It's not easy to make a calendar of the bird year. One of the biggest difficulties is that some of the seasons overlap. For example, we can't start the year in January as with the normal calendar, for January is right in the middle of a season. Another season starts in February, but we can't start the bird calendar there either, for February is in the midst of still another season. And so it goes throughout the months. We might try making up our calendar in the form of a circle, but that means we have to keep turning the calendar around in order to study any particular part of it or to read what it says.

Still another way to draw up our calendar is to repeat some of the months at the beginning and end of it, as illustrated below. Thus it will be seen that, although the calendar starts with February, it ends with March, so that both February and March appear twice. (Another way to draw up our calendar would be to make it up in bird divisions first, and show our monthly divisions parenthetically.) Now that we have our calendar in visual form, let's study it a bit and see what it consists of.



FEATHERS

Spring Awakening

Not to depart too much from the conventional type of calendar, let's start near the beginning of our own year with what I have called, for lack of a better name, the Spring Awakening. This is the period in which the urge to go back North first makes itself felt, causing our early spring migrants to start once more on their journey to summer breeding grounds.

The early migrants often make their appearance as early as February, and they continue to be found, in gradually increasing numbers, until about the first of April, when the heavy migration really gets under way. This next period is the start of two bird seasons.

Big Push

About the first of April the really heavy spring migration starts, continuing on until June, when most of the northward migration is over for the year. This I have labeled the Big Push, and it is at this time that the enthusiasm of both bird and observer reaches its peak. The birds swarm northwards, and the bird lovers swarm out to meet them, searching enthusiastically for (and often finding, if their descriptions are to be believed) additional species.

Summer Concert

At about the same time the Big Push gets under way, the Summer Concert begins. I have named it the Summer Concert to describe the period during which the steady, persistent song of the summer residents may be heard from tree and thicket, from field and housetop.

Perhaps the best indicator of this season is the robin. Not very long after he arrives in the spring he starts his regular daily habit of singing the song which never seems to grow tiresome -- except when we wish he'd be quiet in order to let us listen to that hermit thrush over there. The robin song continues steadily, heralding the first flush of dawn and singing an optimistic farewell to the fading daylight. Suddenly, in the fall, we realize that we are hearing it no longer, and the period of the Summer Concert is over.

True, some species continue to sing after the robin stops, but the singing is more or less sporadic. The vireos are typical examples, and the wood pewee. But another bird season is occupying our attention by now, so what do we care?

Shore-bird Time

Shore-bird Time is with us before we know it. It starts in mid-summer, as so many bird students find it hard to remember, the first shore-birds showing up early in July. In reality it is the first evidence of the fall migration, but it is

so specific in nature and restricted to so comparatively few species that it deserves recognition in another way.

From July through October the sandpipers and plovers are found along our shores -- if we have been thoughtful enough to arrange our rainfall properly to provide suitable feeding places for them. If not, they go somewhere else -- or pass on through. I have never been able to find out where they go in periods of generally high water, but evidently they have a place they go to. Perhaps it's the same place where the birds go on a windy winter day, when the most diligent search fails to disclose the abundant bird life which was manifest the day before.

Southward Trek

Inasmuch as the beginning of Shore-bird Time is, after all, the beginning of the fall migration, we are now in the midst of another big bird season -- one of the longest in the entire bird year: the Southward Trek. For some reason that has never been explained to me, but which is probably quite simple and obvious, the fall migration seems to take much longer than its spring counterpart. Starting in mid-July, with the appearance of the first shore-birds, it continues through November, when the last bitter-enders take their leave.

The Southward Trek is always a sad time to me, yet it can be a very instructive and fruitful time to the sincere bird student. Bird study is difficult during that period, for the birds are hidden among the leaves, their plumage is dulled, and they sing but little -- but they are there, just the same. And the data on fall migration covering species and end dates are all too few in comparison to the migration in the spring.

Winter Wanderings

And now we come to one of the most interesting periods of the bird year, the Winter Wanderings. This is the time of our feeding stations. It is the time when we never quite know what to expect next, whether it be snowy owl or red crossbill.

We never know when our goldfinches are going to turn out to be "sispolls" (that mysterious species which is either siskin or redpoll and is very difficult to identify). And we greet happily any small flocks of juncos we may find, with a sense of deep gratitude for small favors. Should our day include a wintering robin, redwing, or meadowlark, we count our thrill a bigger one than the discovery of a rare warbler in springtime. For it is a thrill accentuated by its solitude; there is nothing else to dim its luster, whereas the finding of any special species in spring is accompanied by so many other discoveries we haven't time to enjoy any one of them to its fullest.

FEATHERS

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Annual Membership: Active, \$2; Assoc., \$1

Mrs. Anna Dickerman, Editor
1088 Dean Street, Schenectady, N. Y.

EARLY GROSBEAKS

Three independent reports of evening grosbeaks here in late October and early November indicate a particularly early arrival of these interesting visitors from the Northwest. It is usually Christmas when the birds are first seen here, or even late winter and early spring.

From Albany, David B. Cook of the State Conservation Department has written:

"On October 30 at Stephentown Center, Rensselaer County, a flock of six evening grosbeaks, including two adult males, was seen feeding along a town road $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of the Center. The birds were eating sumac berries, and I had opportunity to view them at 20 feet for 15 minutes.

"I have checked this with Dr. House of the State Museum and he agrees that it is an unusually early date. If any of the members of the Schenectady Bird Club report this species, I would be interested in hearing about it."

On October 26 a flock of six evening grosbeaks was seen by Mrs. Emmet Smith of Guilderland Center, feeding on weed seeds to the rear of her home.

The third report, probably for these same birds, showed three adult male grosbeaks in the yard of Mrs. Roscoe Wilson, also of Guilderland Center. They were feeding on apples. The birds were recorded November 9, 10 and 11, and steps were taken immediately to supply them with sunflower seeds in the hope they would remain.

OUR FIFTH CHRISTMAS CENSUS

Members of the Schenectady Bird Club set something of a record in connection with their annual Christmas Census last year. Those who were out vividly recall the temperature -- it remained far below zero throughout the day. And there was a wind. But, even so, a robin was among those birds seen.

The Club's fifth annual census is scheduled this year on Sunday, December 26, with the same territory and the same rules as in previous years. The December meeting of the club will be devoted to completing plans for the trip. The leader will be announced at the meeting.

Previous census trips have included a good representation of the club. Well it might, for the plans are so arranged

that each member can fit into the schedule according to the amount of time he has available, how much hiking he wants to do, and what section of the territory he would like to cover.

While final plans will not be completed until the December meeting is held, it has been asked that those planning on taking part notify either Miss Van Vorst, secretary, or Esly Hallenbeck, chairman of field activities.

URBAN BARN OWL

B. D. Miller

With most local observers a barn owl is one of the "rare birds," born out by the records because none has been reported to the Schenectady Bird Club in several years. The 1937 booklet, "Birds of Schenectady," listed the owl as "Very rare, breeds," and, on a subsequently added page, reports one as having been seen September 4, 1937, at Hiskayuna.

We now have a recent report, this one from C. L. Perry, who found one during late October perched in a tree near his home on Rugby Road. When he first saw it, Mr. Perry was a little doubtful about his identification because its coloring did not agree with the book he consulted; but a later check made by J. M. Hollister, who saw its "monkey face," leaves little doubt that Mr. Perry's bird was a barn owl.

As a beneficial bird, in confining its diet almost entirely to rats and mice, the barn owl probably takes first place among the owls. Those of us who saw Allan Cruickshank show his superb motion pictures of the barn owls a few years ago will remember his words of praise for this remarkable bird. He had photographic records of their bringing to the nest these destructive rodents, as well as pictures of the young, and of the nest made entirely of hair pellets.

I wish Mr. Cruickshank, or someone else, would tell us by what mechanism or process owls do such a perfect job in separating their "wheat from the chaff." Is this regurgitated by-product processed in the crop or gizzard? The pellets I have examined consist of about 95% hair and 5% bones, according to my estimate. Sometimes, among the bones, a portion of the jaw and larger leg bones of mice are easily identified. It must be a highly efficient process, because I have never found evidence of edible materials discarded in this way.

In this respect, domestic fowls might learn something of value to them, because death is occasionally caused among them by indigestible material blocking the exits of their crops. Who can throw a little light on this interesting matter?

AT THE RESERVOIR

George H. Bainbridge

On October 24, several members of S B C went with Stacey Poor, vice president of the Linnaean Society of New York City, to the Watervliet Reservoir and to the Helderbergs, to show him some of the birding possibilities of this territory.

The Watervliet Reservoir was in prime condition for shore birds, with the water probably about as low as it has been in several years. There were many shore- and water-birds to be seen, but it was possible to identify only killdeer, greater yellow-legs, dowitcher, and great blue heron. There were two low-flying duck-like birds, possibly coot, and some unidentified members of the sandpiper family. A telescope would have been helpful, but unfortunately this was left at home.

In the Helderbergs the hawks were relatively few. One was positively identified as a red-tailed, but four others were flying so high as to be beyond any identifying range with 6- and 8-power glasses, except that they definitely were buteos. Other birds of the day included goldfinches and bluebirds, each in a flock; a myrtle warbler; blue jays; grouse; downy woodpecker; chickadee; tree sparrow; song sparrow; juncos, in flocks; crows in great numbers; white-throated sparrow; golden-crowned kinglet; robin; starlings; white-breasted nuthatch; field sparrow; and, of course, the ubiquitous English sparrow.

EXCEPTION TO RULE

The question was recently put up to an S B C member as to whether or not the male, in the case of those species where there is a difference in coloration, is always the more brilliantly plumaged. The rule is that such is the case, but it seems as though there's always an exception to any rule.

Among the birds we have regularly, the belted kingfisher rates as an exception. Some might say that the female kingfisher is not more brilliantly colored, but it does have color additional to those of the male. She has rufous on the sides and across the belly.

The phalaropes, or swimming snipe, are decidedly exceptions to the rule. The female is larger, and much more brilliant in plumage. She does the wooing, and he incubates the eggs. While speaking of the female as larger, it is also of interest to note that female hawks in general are larger than the males.

SASSAFRAS HOLLOW

The first feature article in the Audubon Magazine of September-October is entitled "In Sassafras Hollow." It was written by Walter Elwood, and is illustrated with numerous photographs by Harlow W. Smith. Mr. Elwood is, of course, well known to most S B C members, since he has appeared on several occasions at S B C meetings. And the Sassafras Bird Club and its sanctuary are similarly well known to Schenectadians.

Mr. Elwood and Amsterdam are to be complimented on the fine job that has been done at Amsterdam. There is plenty of thought for the Schenectady Bird Club in the article -- why shouldn't Schenectady organize for the development of a wild-life sanctuary?



NEWS & NOTES IN BRIEF

LATE HOUSE WREN -- A late date was established in the case of a house wren recorded October 21 by George H. Bainbridge in his yard in Scotia. A search for the bird on the following day was fruitless, indicating it had continued its trip.

LATE HERONS -- Just as in the case of the house wren mentioned above, black-crowned night herons remained in numbers this year beyond their usual departure date. During the night of October 31 - November 1 -- continuing beyond midnight -- the herons could be heard in flight along the Niskayuna part of the river. Attempts to hear them similarly on subsequent nights were fruitless.

DAWN SINGER -- One of Niskayuna's screech owls is regularly to be heard just after dark. Occasionally, particularly in late October and early November, it was also to be heard in the early morning, just after daybreak.

In the same general section, but much later at night, a great horned owl was also to be heard regularly in those weeks.

ONE LESS OWL -- We've had another hunting season, so it's not easy to say how many fewer owls there are here now. There's at least one less. A boy in late October found a barred owl in a barn along the Rosendale Road, and easily captured it. Well he might, for some hunter had fired at it and wounded the bird. It had a broken leg and injured shoulder, and did not survive.

There seems to be something about an owl, a hawk or, in fact, any bird that makes trigger-fingers itch.

WINTER RARITIES -- It's not too soon to start watching for those out-of-season birds which are such a delight to find on the day of the Christmas Census, this year on December 26. And the same applies to those hard-to-find birds that may be permanent residents or regular winter visitors.

For instance, anyone seeing great blue herons, robins, bluebirds or flickers -- or any others of such stragglers -- should try to keep their movements under observation so they may appear on the census. And owls, even though they are with us constantly, are far from the easiest to add to the Census count. Those having information as to the winter quarters of these nocturnal birds should keep them under surveillance.

Right now there are indications that the evening grosbeak may appear on this year's census list for the first time in many counts -- but they may not appear on the list unless someone checks on the wanderings of the flocks which may settle locally.

WINTER AT BUFFALO -- Even though Schenectady was still snowless and Buffalo had its usual early-season blanket of snow on Armistice Day, one S B C member who happened to be there after Buffalo received its five-inch blanket of white found that robins were more common in Buffalo than in Schenectady. He had seen none at Schenectady for several days, but did see two in Buffalo's Delaware Park, along the edge of the drive.

WINTER FEEDING -- While on the subject of winter, probably it would be well here to speak about winter feeding stations. If you intend to operate a feeder this year, now is the time to start it.

More important than starting one, however, is to keep it in operation once it is started. There may be a question as to the need of feeding stations in your particular neighborhood, but there is no question about keeping it going all of the time -- the birds will come to depend on it, and inclement weather is just the time they will need it the most.

Suet will not be so easy to obtain as in other years, and the same applies to raisins, sunflower seeds, and others of the favorite foods. But peanut butter, bread crumbs and table scraps will all be welcomed.

A feeder can be as simple or elaborate as desired. A piece of suet nailed against the trunk of a tree; a simple shelf against a tree; a window feeder protected by glass; a "feeding stick" with suet or peanut butter poked into holes and hung from a bough; or crumbs and scraps regularly spread over a protected area of ground -- all will be visited.

Incidentally, while the birds welcome most grains and seeds, it will usually be found that cracked corn is not relished.

If cats or squirrels prove to be a problem, they can be discouraged by wrapping sheet metal around the tree or post below the feeder -- and perhaps above the feeder on a tree to solve the squirrel problem. The metal wrapping should be wide enough to keep the animal from reaching across it.

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WATER, LOW; BIRD COUNT, GOOD

Rudolph H. Stone

From the high point along the Altamont Road at Watervliet Reservoir on October 14, H. V. D. Allen and I observed three birds with very long bills and short legs. They were entirely new to me, but Mr. Allen knew them to be dowitchers, which are seldom observed in Schenectady territory. The birds were feeding in a little group out in the water, and their bellies touched the water. Their feeding motions were piledriver-like and their bills were almost constantly pointed downward, "dragging" in the water. They were very tame. When finally flushed into flight, they showed a long, narrow white patch on the back as they flew away from us.

Rare Plovers

On October 15 I cycled to the reservoir with Arthur Kimball of Scotia, primarily to see the dowitchers. We not only saw them but unravelled an eye-popping array of records.

Best of the records were those of the golden plover, rare but apparently on the increase, and two black-bellied plovers. The black-bellies were way out on a spit of mudflat when we arrived, but the golden plover flew in, as dramatically as possible, while we were there. He uttered a long, rather harsh whistle, in contrast to the mellow whistles of the black-bellies. Even in fall plumage, these two were easily identified.

White-rumped

Two white-rumped sandpipers also flew in while we were looking at the golden plover. The whole succession of events was almost breathtaking. The white-rumps had squeaky, staccato notes, and exhibited white rump, black tail and, since it was fall, a broad whitish stripe over the eye.

We also saw several greater yellow-legs, two semipalmated plovers, many pectoral sandpipers, and utter slews of pipits which intermingled with the shore-birds. The Schenectady area was full of pipits in mid-October.

On October 18 I returned to the Watervliet Reservoir flats alone. The first thing I saw was an immature bald eagle

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as I approached the reservoir. Then I went down on the flats and found that two additional birds had joined the three dowitchers. Several greater yellow-legs were there, and the two white-rumped sandpipers were also on hand. Most numerous were the pectorals.

Two Puzzlers

These two birds who had joined the dowitchers puzzled me for a while. I chased them for several hours all over the flats. Finally I decided one was a lesser yellow-legs, which incidentally was less numerous than greater in this period. The lesser yellow-legs were so much smaller than the greater that I was temporarily thrown off the track. There were two lessers there October 14, none on the 15th, one on the 18th. There were five greater's October 15 and 18, and none the 14th.

A Knot, Rarest of All

The other bird was different, and I finally decided it was a knot, for these reasons:

1. Pearly gray back.
2. Whitish rump and tail.
3. Relatively short, straight bill.
4. Buzzy note repeated in long flight.
5. Soft two-note whistle when flushed.
6. Legs, by sight comparison, shorter than the dowitcher's.
7. Fed out in the water, his stomach touching as in the case of the dowitcher -- this jibed with a similar observation by Mr. Allen at Nantucket.

Many of these characters are mentioned by Forbush in "Birds of Massachusetts."

CHRISTMAS CENSUS

Plans for the Schenectady Bird Club's annual Christmas Census count will be made at the December meeting, to be held Monday night, December 13, at the Y. M. C. A. The leader for the day's outing will be H. V. D. Allen. Members of the club who are planning to participate in the count, and who will be unable to attend the meeting, should communicate with Mr. Allen, so that all will be included in the plans.

Mr. Allen has requested that all having recent records of unusual birds let him know, so that arrangements can be made to endeavor to find them on Sunday, December 26, the date of the census count. Owls, robins, bluebirds, doves, flickers, evening and pine grosbeaks, and such species are among the possibilities now being sought.

THE AMERICAN EGRET

SOME NOTES ON ITS DISTRIBUTION

During a W G Y Science Forum broadcast last summer a request was made for reports from listeners on American egrets that might have been seen that summer or in previous years. Reports were received from several of the W G Y audience.

In the following article these reports, together with previously published information from Schenectady and vicinity, are summarized. ...G.B.
.....

The American egret, a snowy white heron only slightly smaller than the great blue heron, has a yellow bill and black legs. It flies with slow wing beat, with its legs extended to the rear, and with its long neck pulled in. Standing along the shore, or in shallow water, or deep in the cat-tails, it may, stork-like, have one leg up out of the water; and may have its neck drawn in or, particularly when alert or alarmed, extended.

The egret was facing extermination at the beginning of this century. The source of supply of aigrettes -- plumes worn only during the breeding season -- the birds had been so persecuted by plume-hunters in southern swamps that it seemed probable that the egret was doomed to suffer the fate of the passenger pigeon, Carolina parakeet, great auk, Labrador duck, heath hen, and other birds that have vanished.

Bloodshed and Murder

The Audubon Society and other agencies became active, however. Aigrette plumes were outlawed; and wardens were ordered to protect the few remnants of the breeding colonies. Aigrettes, to be obtained only from American herons, became worth far more than their weight in gold in foreign markets; and the struggle to save the egret was marked with bloodshed and murder, at least one warden having been killed by hunters seeking the nesting birds.

Here 25 Years

That the campaign to save the birds has been particularly successful is apparent from the records of recent years. For at least 25 years Schenectady has had egrets as regular summer visitors, usually from late July to mid-September, and with maximum dates of mid-June and mid-November. Other places in the northeast have also been finding the bird increasingly common, and in most recent seasons the birds have been widespread as post-nesting wanderers.

Ornithologists formerly listed the egret as common in the south, and nesting as far north as New Jersey. Then the listing dropped the more northern nesting areas and showed the bird as decreasing. Now it again breeds in New Jersey.

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Crescent Lake, Niskayuna

A check-up made in 1930 shows that the American egret had been seen regularly late each summer along the Crescent Lake section of the Mohawk River at Niskayuna since 1919, with at least one but not more than three of the birds there each year, according to reports by different residents of the neighborhood. Since then the egrets have been seen every year except 1934, in increasing numbers, and with a maximum of 27 in 1937.

Watervliet Reservoir has also had egrets for many years. The late Professor Barnard S. Bronson and the late Clarence Houghton, both of Albany, each recorded one there in 1921. Mr. Houghton's record was for September 10. In 1923 Professor Bronson recorded one there on July 25, and Mr. Houghton on August 5. On August 2, 1925, Edgar Bedell saw two egrets at the reservoir and, in Bird-Lore, wrote: "Egrets are not casual visitors here; probably every other year they appear during August, either at this reservoir 15 miles from Albany, or along the Mohawk River, near Niskayuna, about 12 miles north of the reservoir."

On August 2, 1925 an American egret dropped into a small marsh at Schodack and is now in the New York State Museum, Sherman C. Bishop, then of the Museum, reported in The Auk.

Along the Hudson

It is along the Hudson River below Albany, however, where American egrets are to be found in numbers. The birds are particularly numerous in the Stockport and Hudson marshes. From either New York Central trains or from the decks of the Hudson River day boats it is possible to count the birds by the scores -- members of the Schenectady Bird Club counted more than 50 of them on an Albany-Kingston Point boat trip on September 19, 1943; about as many August 15 of the preceding year; and even more on August 2, 1941. Dr. Dayton Stoner of the State Museum has similarly reported boat counts - on August 27, 1940, 45 on the trip down, in the 20 miles between Coxsackie and Saugerties, and 93 in the 25 miles back from Saugerties to Stuyvesant; on August 6, 1942, 49 on the trip down and 69 on the trip back; and on September 2, 1942, 18 going down and 93 on the return trip. Hudson River counts from fast-moving trains have shown 53 in 1933; fewer in 1934; more in 1935 and 1936; 82 in August, 1937, on a trip down and 76 on the return trip.

Records Widespread

The Crescent Lake section of the Mohawk, Watervliet Reservoir, and the Hudson below Albany seem to have the most numerous records for the American egret; but there is hardly a pond, lake, stream, or swamp throughout the general section which does not occasionally receive a visit from at least one of the birds -- one has even been recorded in Schenectady's

Central Park Lake, and even in flight over General Electric.

Earliest arrival date locally is that of Chester N. Moore for two birds at Crescent Lake on June 17, 1939. The latest date is that of Nelle Van Vorst, who recorded one at Water-vliet Reservoir on November 14, 1937, after frosts.

Some of the reports from W G Y listeners follow:

Saratoga Springs, N. Y.

Dorothy W. Caldwell

My first glimpse of the American egret in New York State was on July 18, 1937, when I saw three of the stately birds in a little marsh near Cambridge, N. Y. On August 28 of the same year I saw one bird on the bank of the Mohawk River near Canajoharie.

In 1938, on September 3 and again on September 11, I saw one bird in the Mohawk Valley near Sprakers, N. Y.

During the next four years I was interested in seeing from several to many of the birds each year during August and September in the Mohawk Valley near Niskayuna, and in the Hudson Valley in the marshes near Stockport.

My first and most memorable view of all was coming unexpectedly upon several of these beautiful birds in the salt marshes near Point Judith, R. I., in August, 1929. It was then I learned of their habit of wandering north after the close of their nesting season.

Amsterdam, N. Y.

Walter Elwood

While records of the American egret in the immediate vicinity of Amsterdam seem to be lacking, there are the following records by Amsterdam observers in the general vicinity:

Several August records previous to 1940 for the western half of Montgomery County, especially in the shallow waters of the Mohawk River between Sprakers and Fort Plain.

Some 75 American egrets were observed on August 30, 1939, on the Hudson River in the Rip Van Winkle Bridge section. So plentiful were they that I was able to count 18 at one time from the train window, all in sight at once; at another time 10, etc.

On August 27, 1940, I saw two American egrets in the upper Hudson Valley, and on August 29 I saw 28 in the same region. This is the section just below Albany.

Two American egrets were seen August 10, 1943, in the upper Hudson below Albany, and on August 13 four were seen.

Mrs. Harriet B. Webb of Amsterdam saw a single egret on two occasions in the shallow bay of the big Sacandaga Reservoir in 1940.

Dr. and Mrs. David Wilson of Amsterdam reported seeing a lone egret in the shallow waters of the Galway Reservoir, northeast of Amsterdam, five or six years ago.

On July 22, 1933, Mrs. H. S. Brown of Amsterdam saw six of the birds in the Niskayuna section at Schenectady. In 1931 egrets were reported near Schenectady by Mrs. William B.

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Charles, Jr., of Amsterdam.

Several of us, including Mrs. Brown and me, saw four American egrets in a pond east of Lenox, Mass.

Fort Plain, N. Y.

Douglas Ayres, Jr.

I first saw the American egret August 3, 1937, two miles west of Fort Plain, flying along the river. I only had a view of the bird in flight, and I never saw it again.

On August 13, 1937, an egret was seen in the town of Root, Montgomery County, by Harry Darrow of Canajoharie.

An egret appeared July 13, 1938, one mile west of Fort Plain, along the old Mohawk River channel which borders Abeel Island bird refuge on the west. On July 14 two egrets flew over the island (a 50-acre wild tract under the supervision of the Otsquago Fish and Game Protective Association, Inc., of Fort Plain). These birds were wading in shallow water along the island edge and around the margin of a cove on the west side of the river. I saw them catch and devour several small fish. Standing near them were a great blue heron and a black-crowned night heron.

The egrets were continuously present for the next two weeks, and all one hot afternoon while I was repairing my boat I saw them flying back and forth.

On July 30 Carleton Burke and I made motion pictures in color of the birds. He was associated with the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences at that time as a research fellow. The pictures are now in the files of the Rochester Museum.

Although I am in a position to keep the bird life along the river under constant observation, I have had no further opportunities to study this beautiful species.

Pittsfield, Mass.

Elizabeth Ball

There was an American egret in Berkshire County this year. First reported by Samuel Eliot of Northampton on July 22, a small boy in the neighborhood said it was there at least a week before then. The bird, at Lake Onota, Pittsfield, could be seen regularly all the time between then and September 9, when it was last seen by Dorothy Snyder. We were at the lake September 11, 12 and later without seeing the bird again.

Hanover, N. H.

Mrs. Chester Forsyth

Hanover is too far north for American egrets usually to appear, although I believe they come into Massachusetts every year. But in 1937 they were seen in Vermont and New Hampshire, along the Connecticut River and nearby rivers and ponds. That summer I was occupying a farm house, with a pond in the pasture, where the great blue heron came every summer after the nesting season. That summer on July 31 he arrived as usual, but with an American egret as a companion. The white bird roosting in the trees was quite conspicuous, and everyone stopped to look at him. He stayed until September 14. On August 20 and 21 there was a second egret also there.

JANUARY -- Twenty Below, But All Was Well (Christmas Census), Alice Holmes, 1; Afield with Aretas A. Saunders, Malcolm Andrews, 4; They Both Have Wings (Birds and Insects), J. M. Hollister, 7.

FEBRUARY -- Bird Records for Eastern New York, Dayton Stoner, 9; An Unusual Red-wing Nest (with photograph), 14.

MARCH -- A Seventeen-year Record of the Birds at Mount McGregor (Dorothy W. Caldwell), Part 1, 17; Truly Wintry, Donald Buckley, 24.

APRIL -- Schenectady's Nesting Eagle, Virginia Freligh, 25; Birds at Mount McGregor, Part 2 (with map), 27; Winter Along the Shore, Nelle Van Vorst, 30.

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